







DUNALLAN;

OR,

KNOW WHAT YOU JUDGE;

A STORY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DECISION,"
"FATHER CLEMENT," &c. &c.

VOL. II.

SECOND EDITION.

EDINBURGH:

PUBLISHED BY W. OLIPHANT, 22, SOUTH BRIDGE;
AND HAMILTON, ADAMS & CO. 33, PATERNOSTER
ROW, LONDON.

M.DCCC.XXV.

PRINTED BY A. BALFOUR AND CO.

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1825
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DUNALLAN, &c.

DUNALLAN'S LETTER.

“MY father's friend, to whose seat near London I immediately repaired on leaving college, was a man of the most insinuating manners, and immediately acquired great influence over my mind. He found me very ignorant of the world, as it really is, and told me so. He advised me to make human nature, as it appeared in society, my peculiar study, adding, that the experience of another could not make me acquainted with it; and that with my present notions of it, I need not attempt to enter on a political life. I asked his advice as to where I should seek this indispensable knowledge. But this will not interest you, my dearest Catharine. I will only tell you,

that he warned me against attaching myself to any party, an advice I had often received from Churchill also while at college; and to use my own observation and reason in judging. Lord Coverdale (that was the name of my father's friend) also directed me to books fitted to promote my pursuits; and full of the determination to find something to examine in every person I met in every society, I set off for my father's. I had not seen him since my mother's death, and a very short residence at home proved to me that it no longer could have any attraction for me. Mrs. Oswald has, I believe, informed you, my dear Catharine, of the unhappy view of human nature which this visit at home was calculated to give me, in a way in which the lesson was indeed impressive. I was most wretched while witnessing it; and when I found that my influence with my father could not overcome that of one of the worst of beings, and that I had no hope of any change, I determined to seek that happiness elsewhere which I could no longer enjoy under my father's roof. I went to London, and spent most of my time at my brother-in-law, Harcourt's, where I had an opportunity of finding, as I supposed, all I was in search of, human nature in every variety of character. I studied the subject for some time without involving myself in any

of the various pursuits and follies of the different men I associated with. This arose less from any previous resolutions, than from their want of congeniality with my taste. As to women, those with whom my sister was most intimate had few attractions for me. I admired their beauty and grace, but they all resembled each other so closely in character and trifling pursuits, that I soon lost all curiosity and desire to form new acquaintances among them. Harcourt laughed at my insensibility on this subject, and tried every means, some of which were highly improper, to do it away, but in vain. My taste was really too refined to tolerate open vice, and my morals still too pure to contemplate without disgust many scenes to which he attempted to introduce me. Harcourt had reasons for wishing me to become as vicious as I afterwards discovered himself to be. He introduced me to all sorts of society. Young and inexperienced as I was, and having been assured also by Lord Coverdale, that I had formed an idea of the world which was entirely visionary, I only thought when I heard or saw what shocked me, that I was discovering what was real. Churchill, to whom I wrote every thing which interested me, at last ventured to caution me against being led by Harcourt. 'The world you describe,' said he in a letter to me,

‘is worse than *even I* supposed it. Can you breathe such an atmosphere, Dunallan, and still believe in the purity of human nature?’ I replied, that large and corrupted towns were not the scenes in which to judge of human nature fairly, though those who aspired to governing their fellow men ought to know them in all varieties of conditions, and that I should not yield to the disgust I felt while my own heart was innocent, (for so I then ignorantly thought it,) and while I remembered him. I acknowledged, however, that I did begin to feel less ambition to distinguish myself in the busier scenes of life. After this I gradually withdrew from Harcourt, to whose character my eyes were at last in some degree opened. He perceived this, and would probably have lost all influence over me, had he not at that time found means to become intimate in the house of a man of high rank, the inmates of which possessed the most fascinating manners. This person was leader of a particular party in politics, so markedly, that my political friend, Lord Coverdale, had warned me against forming an intimacy in his family, unless I meant myself to be considered as attached to the same party. Harcourt brought me an invitation to a select party at this house, expressed in such flattering terms, that I felt it would be very marked in me

to decline it. I informed Lord Coverdale of my intention to accept of this invitation. He seemed vexed and displeased, and asked me if I did not know that it was, in a refined way, one of the most immoral houses in the country. He had not hitherto paid much regard to my morals; I therefore was convinced by this appearance of anxiety about them now, that a suspicion I had some time entertained was just, (for I now did begin to see through men;) this was, that Lord Coverdale, with all his professions of dislike to party, was himself in heart strongly opposed to that party, of whom Harcourt's friend was a leader. This conviction disgusted me, and I therefore continued politely firm in declaring my intention to visit at this house. When Lord Coverdale saw I was determined, he immediately overcame his vexation, and in the most cordial manner advised me to study the characters I should meet at Lord ——'s, as they were, in talent at least, some of the first men in the country. 'And,' added he, laughing, 'the women too, whom you will meet there, are the first in female talent also.'

“The preparation, and dread of danger, with which I commenced my acquaintance at Lord ——'s, made me, I believe, the more easily deceived. I had been assured that he and his

friends courted all young men of fortune, in order to attach them to their party in politics. I expected this courting, and was prepared to resist, but I was disappointed. I was indeed received with very flattering distinction; but this I immediately saw arose from the character given of me by some of my numerous college friends, who, I found, were intimate in this family.

“Talents, wit, great acquirement of every kind, genius, taste, scientific knowledge, a taste for the fine arts, superior artists themselves; in short, whatever was calculated to please or inform, gained admittance here. Dullness and ignorance only were excluded; and in the family, and those they admitted to closest intimacy, the most fascinating and dignified polish was added to the most perfect ease of manners. I soon found that, to gain the esteem of those around me, it was necessary I should exert all the talents I possessed. This stimulus to my natural desire of distinction was delightful to me; and I found in this society a charm which no other had afforded me.

“In a short time I found that I had not exerted myself in vain. I saw that I was regarded with a degree of respect which flattered my pride by all whom I met at this house, comprising many of my own former friends, and also many men of high character for talents in almost every department

of the higher classes of society. I felt that something superior was expected from me, and I laboured not to disappoint their expectation. The women also, whom I met here, inspired me with an admiration, which I had not till then felt for any of the sex; and for one lady, I dared scarcely to myself confess the nature of my feelings. She resided almost constantly with this family, with whom she was connected by marriage. Her husband was also frequently an inmate in the house. I see you start, Catharine, and you must prepare yourself now to hear, that the human heart can deceive itself to a degree, of which I know you have no idea. As this lady is still received into, and thought an ornament to many societies, I do not feel myself at liberty to disclose her name even to you, my dear Catharine. I shall, therefore, conceal her real name under that of Aspasia. Aspasia, then, was at that time at least fifteen years older than I was, but still very beautiful, though quite unindebted to art. There was also in her countenance an expression of mind and soul, which captivated me the first moment I beheld her. I ought here to inform my dearest of friends, that this delusion is long past, and that now the idea of Aspasia is to me the most painful that ever visits my recollection. Aspasia's person was also strikingly grace-

ful. Her talents were very superior, and she seemed devoted to their cultivation. She was singularly well-informed on almost every subject, her language was beautifully pure, and her voice harmony itself. On my first introduction to her, she seemed pleased, and entered into conversation with me; but for some time afterwards she took scarcely any notice of me. She was, however, among the many attractions of this house, that which induced me to forego every other consideration; such as being considered a party man in politics, and a free-thinker and libertine, at least in principle, of which I found all the intimate friends of this family were suspected. But no remonstrances of Lord Coverdale's, or even of Churchill's, who from the first disliked my description of this family, could prevail on me to give up a society where all I heard and saw was calculated to delight me; and where I constantly met Aspasia. The truth was, that I could perceive none of those dangers with which my friends threatened me; and there appeared no wish to deceive: on the contrary, the manners of those persons who were most esteemed and admired, were singularly open and simple; and their extreme polish seemed to be the consequence of that superior information, and that elegance and refinement of taste, which were here

cultivated as the highest ornaments of human nature. Aspasia was particularly simple in her manner; but her every motion was grace, and every tone of her voice music itself. She was the idol of the scene. Her talents, her perseverance in their cultivation, her perfect ease of manner, her brilliant fancy, and charming powers of conversation, rendered her the delight of the wise and the grave, almost as much as she was the idol of the young and ardent. Her beauty, and grace, and gently playful gaiety, threw an illusive charm around her, which blinded the young and inexperienced to the real tendency both of her manners and conversation. I was one of this number. So perverted were my ideas by what I heard and saw around me, that I was insensible to the impropriety of a married woman thus receiving, without any apparent displeasure, the marked homage of many young men of very dissipated character; and indeed of almost every man who approached her, although those who were more experienced assumed the mask of friendship, while the young and less guarded openly betrayed their sentiments.

“But, my dear Catharine, I do not mean to lead you through the scenes which debased my mind at that time. I imbibed without examination or suspicion the opinions which I heard con-

stantly repeated in this society, where superior talents seemed to be considered as an excuse for uncontrolled passions; or rather, they were considered as inseparable; and strict virtue and morality were only to be expected from the naturally dull and phlegmatic. I gradually learnt to despise those virtues most necessary to the happiness of mankind; or at least to consider them as fit only for the useful drudges in society. Women even were included in this opinion; and those crimes by which they destroy the most sacred bonds of society, I considered even too severely punished by their being rejected from that society.

“ My ardent wishes and unwearied efforts to render myself agreeable to Aspasia at last succeeded: she treated me with marked preference, and I was intoxicated by the dangerous distinction. The family had gone to a beautiful residence in the country; and so complete was the freedom of every inmate, or visitor, that our particular friendship seemed scarcely observed, unless by my numerous rivals. I now thought of nothing but Aspasia, she was equally devoted to me.

I look back with astonishment, and the deepest shame to that part of my life; and I feel that you, Catharine, must be disgusted with the pic-

ture I have drawn; but I wish to show you the state of delusion at which I had arrived, that you may be convinced of the absolute necessity of other principles than those with which I began life. So completely blinded was I then, that without really deserving the imputation of hypocrisy, I could talk of virtue, whilst I trampled on its plainest laws. I could talk of honour, as many men constantly do, while acting a part the most base. I could talk loudly of the good of society, and of the corruption which disgraced those who gave it laws, whilst I was violating its most sacred obligations.

“ We returned to town in a few months. Aspasia was still my idol; but I began at intervals to see things as they really were. I, however, hated the light which showed me the real nature of that course on which I had entered. I became gloomy and sad. Aspasia alone had still the power to charm. I recalled my former opinions of the powers of human nature, of reason, of high resolutions, with feelings of bitter ridicule, and raised my thoughts in rebellious murmurs to that Being who plants the intolerable stings of remorse in the same heart whose passions are too strong to be restrained by the weakness of reason.

“ I had neglected to write to Walderford, and

even to Churchill, yet they both continued to write to me with the utmost kindness. But their letters gave me little pleasure, for they seemed still happy in those delusions which had charmed them in their days of innocence and hope, while I had discovered the fallacy of mine. I felt miserable, and imagined that ignorance of the world only could make any man hope to find happiness in it. I was conscious I possessed in a great degree all it could give. I knew at least that I was regarded as the most fortunate amongst those with whom I associated. The party to whom I was considered to belong spoke in exaggerated terms of my character. I had succeeded in winning the woman I loved. I was received in society, and by other women, with that flattering distinction with which young men with high worldly prospects are usually received; yet I wearied of it all, nor could any thing but ignorance make Walderford happy, living in a retired situation, with an old and peevish father, and some friends of that father as disagreeable as himself; or Churchill, doing the tiresome duties of a parish priest in an obscure corner of the country, with no society but a few ignorant fox-hunters or country gentlemen. I wrote to them as I felt, that if they were really happy, it was only the happiness of ignorance, to which I could

not now return. Walderford, in his reply to my letter, did not spare me. He ridiculed the idea of my being wearied of existence, and called it the unmanly and contemptible cant of the day; reminded me of our different principles, and laboured to show me, even from my own confession, that mine were erroneous and useless. I did not again write to him at that time. My heart was too wretched, and my temper had become too irritable to bear the least harshness without resentment. Churchill made the human heart his study, and he knew it better. He wrote to me more kindly and more mildly than ever. He agreed in all I said of the disappointing nature of all that is called pleasure. He invited me to go to him, and in his glowing language described the beauty of the scenery around him. He said, 'that its calm would restore a mind like mine to its natural tone, which had been lost from constant excitement and disappointment; and enable me to see the future through a less gloomy medium, and the fair prospects life still held out for me.' I loved Churchill more than ever on receiving this letter. I looked on him as superior to common humanity, and longed to go to him. The remembrance of the days we had formerly spent together filled my heart with sensations, though sad, yet sweeter than any I ever now ex-

perienced, and I determined to go to him immediately.

“ ‘ I went to Aspasia to impart my intention to her. She was in despair—she knew Churchill’s character from me ; and when I would have taken leave of her, she said, in a voice scarcely articulate, ‘ Farewell, then, Dunallan, farewell for ever!’ and fainted. I could not leave her—I promised whatever she desired—but I felt the thralldom.

“ I wrote Churchill that I could not go to him; and again returned to the same round of insipid engagements, and hopeless pursuit of excitement as before.

“ One night, on returning late to my lodgings, a servant informed me that a gentleman from the country had called on me, and had waited several hours for my return; that he could remain no longer, but would again call in the morning.

“ ‘ Did the gentleman not leave his name?’ asked I.

“ ‘ I did not hear distinctly what he said, Sir,’ replied the man, who had forgot it; ‘but he seemed much disappointed at missing you, Sir. He is a tall, handsome, young gentleman, but looks sickly, and was dressed like a clergyman.’

“ ‘ Churchill!’ exclaimed I.

“ ‘Yes,’ replied the servant, ‘that was the name, Sir.’

“ ‘Where is he to be found?’ asked I, hurrying back to the door.

“ ‘He did not say, Sir.’

“ I was obliged to remain that night without seeing him; but I could not sleep: indeed I seldom slept peacefully at this period of my life.

“ In the morning I watched for my friend in a state of emotion, which convinced me that he was still dearer to me, however I might be entangled in the labyrinth of sin into which I had entered, than Aspasia, or all the world. At last he came—so kind, so mild, so wise, so pure, his conversation seemed to my heart like the dawn of the morning after a night of unhappy dreams. He told me that my last letter had led him to suspect that I had got myself involved in some connexion which was become disagreeable to me, but which I could not break off; and that he had come to town in the hope, that two heads, and one of them happily free, at least on this subject, might be better able than one, to discover some honourable way of escape. ‘If I am mistaken, dear Dunallan, added he, ‘tell me so; I do not wish to intrude myself into your confidence.’

“ ‘Intrude, my dearest, kindest Churchill!’ exclaimed I, ‘your interest in me—your friend-

ship, is more valuable to me than all the world contains besides. You shall know my whole heart, Churchill, though I am conscious that in your eyes, I shall appear a criminal of the first rank.'

" ' I hope not, dear Dunallan ; but if you have erred, the change in your looks prove, that, at least, you have been unhappy in doing so. You must retrace your steps again, my friend, till you return to that state of mind in which you were when we last parted.'

" ' Impossible, Churchill !'

" ' Impossible ! Why so ? Has one year, one short year, at your age, been so fatal to you, Dunallan ! Tell me, Are you married ? And is the object unworthy—unloved ?'

" ' No, Churchill, thank Heaven !'

" ' Thank Heaven !' repeated Churchill, his countenance expressing the greatest joy.

" I told him all that had happened to me. His countenance, on our first meeting, had expressed the most anxious concern on observing the melancholy of my looks, which had led him to fear that I had taken some irremediable step. As I proceeded he listened with the deepest attention, but his eyes were fixed upon the ground ; and though I wished to read his countenance, he commanded it so perfectly, that I could not dis-

cover the impression which my recital had made. When I had finished, he did not express any blame; he only sympathized in my feelings of regret at having involved myself and Aspasia in a connexion fraught with danger to her reputation, and unhappiness, in every way, to both of us. At last he exclaimed,

“ ‘ Now, dear Dunallan, let us form some plan to put an end for ever to this unhappy affair.’ ”

“ ‘ How can I, Churchill? Can I make the woman miserable who has sacrificed every thing for me? And such a woman!’ ”

“ He paused, looking earnestly at me. ‘ Are there any political engagements between you and that party amongst whom you meet Aspasia?’ ”

“ ‘ Not exactly,’ replied I. ‘ I have supported their political opinions with the greatest openness. I have tacitly suffered myself to be talked of as one who, they expect, will, on future occasions, support them. I have made no promise, but should be regarded as having left my party should I not realize those expectations; however, this is of little consequence, as I really in general agree with them in political opinions.’ ”

“ ‘ You have no present engagements with them?’ ”

“ ‘ None.’ ”

“ ‘ Then, Dunallan, if you value peace of mind,

—reputation; if you value any thing that is called virtue, leave Aspasia. You do not, you cannot, see the destructive course on which you have entered, nor its tendency to hurt your every hope, even in this world, until time and absence dispel the delusion which blinds you.”

“ ‘Churchill,’ replied I, ‘I cannot leave Aspasia. You do not know her; my ungrateful desertion would shorten her existence. At least, our separation must be gradual,’ added I, on seeing the expression of grief and disappointment which now clouded Churchill’s countenance. He shook his head: after a pause,

“ ‘You formerly believed in the immortality of the soul, Dunallan,’ said he.

“ ‘I believe in it still, Churchill.’

“ ‘And yet you fear inflicting a short-lived pain on this idol of your affections. Is her soul less immortal?’

“ ‘Aspasia does not feel it, if she is in error,’ replied I; ‘her opinions on these subjects, her real opinions, are different from yours, Churchill.’

“ ‘And from yours, Dunallan?’

“ ‘I do not say they are; but we shall not agree on these subjects; you know, my dear friend, we never did.’

“ ‘Oh, Dunallan!’ exclaimed he, clasping his hands with the most energetic emotion, ‘would

to God that we did agree on those most momentous subjects? Would to God that the Being who formed you so capable of honouring him, and of winning others to his honour, would dispel the cloud in which you have involved your noble faculties! But will you not at least return with me for a few weeks? You promised to visit me; my claim is superior to Aspasia's;—she surely would suffer a claim of friendship if she is so noble-minded—so generous.'

“ ‘Yes, I will, Churchill, on one condition—that you see Aspasia, and do both her and your friend justice; she is not the worthless being you suppose.’

“ ‘See her!’ interrupted Churchill, with an appearance of greater severity than I had ever before seen in him; ‘Why should I see her? Were she sensible of her degradation,’ added he, in a gentler tone of voice, ‘were she an outcast from society, and forsaken by all the world; were she the lowest of human beings, and a penitent, I should feel it a delightful duty to make every effort to restore her to that peace which is offered to the humble and broken spirit; but of what use could I hope to be, and what other motive ought to induce me to see a prosperous, admired, deluded adulteress——.’

“ ‘Stop,’ exclaimed I, ‘you abuse my confidence.’

“ ‘Forgive me, Dunallan,’ replied he, ‘I am too warm; but there were no conditions when you promised me this visit.’

“ ‘No, Churchill; and I shall give up this, and go with you when you please.’

“ ‘I go to-morrow,’ replied he joyfully.

“ ‘What! so soon?’

“ ‘Yes, my profession binds me to home; I ought not to leave it a moment I can avoid.’

“ ‘I am ready,’ said I.

“ ‘You will write to Aspasia.’

“ ‘No, I must see her.’

“ He looked disappointed, and entreated me to write; but I could not consent to leaving her without saying adieu in person.

“ Churchill and I remained together till after dinner, when he said he must leave me, to fulfil an engagement with a friend whom he had accidentally met the evening before; to preach for him on this evening.

“ ‘Preach!’ exclaimed I, ‘it is not Sunday.’

“ ‘No,’ replied he, smiling; ‘but my friend thinks it useful to his people, particularly to those in the lower classes, to lecture once every week as well as on Sunday.’

“ ‘Pho, Churchill!’ replied I, ‘how can you spend your noble eloquence on a set of old women and greasy mechanics? They will not understand you.’

“ ‘You forget, Dunallan, whose servant I am, and upon whom He bestowed His precious divine instructions. Oh, that you knew him, my poor friend, and the pleasures of his service!’

“ Churchill went to his poor people; and I was, in the mean time, to go and take leave of Aspasia. We were to meet again in two hours at my lodgings, from whence we proposed setting off early in the morning.

“ When I entered the library at Lord ——’s, where I usually found Aspasia, and where we generally spent some time in conversation before we joined the party assembled in the drawing-room, I did not find her. I proceeded to a small boudoir, where she sometimes chose to meet me. She was not there either. I began to fear she was displeased at my not having seen her that day. I joined the party in the drawing-room, and glancing round whilst I paid my compliments to the many friends who welcomed me with their usual flattering kindness, I perceived Aspasia seated apart, and apparently so deeply absorbed in a book as not to observe my entrance. I was soon beside her.

“ ‘ Your friends must be jealous of that book, Aspasia.’

“ ‘ My friends must surely wish me to be amused and instructed,’ replied she, looking coldly at me, and again bending over the book. She was looking very lovely. She seemed unhappy, and the expression of sadness particularly suited her style of features.

“ ‘ I must not, then, disturb your enjoyment, Aspasia. I must pass all this day without enjoying your conversation.’

“ She made no reply. I had never seen her thus before. I attempted several times to draw her into conversation, but in vain. At last she rose and left the room. I soon took my leave, and went in quest of her. I found her in the library. She caught up a book when I entered, but I saw she had not been reading, and perceived she was in tears. I entreated her to tell me how I had offended her, and why she regarded me with such looks of coldness and displeasure. She answered, that I was mistaken in supposing she was offended, and that she was unconscious of how she looked.

“ I could wish to describe to my dear Catharine the scene that followed, because I might then, perhaps, appear less inexcusably criminal in her eyes; but even in that hope I will not in-

dulge myself, in thus far trying to palliate what I ought to wish her, and every one to condemn and detest.

“Aspasia’s power over me was so great, that, by arts which I will not describe, she again induced me to promise that I should not go with Churchill.

“It was very late when I returned to my lodgings. I wished to avoid seeing Churchill. I meant to write to him, and to leave the house in the morning before he left his room. I did feel the degradation of shrinking from the sight of any man, and there was not another in the universe to whom I then would even have acknowledged myself guilty; but my pride never shrunk from avowing my errors to Churchill. It was my consciousness of ingratitude—my relinquishing his invaluable friendship from a cause in his eyes so guilty, so contemptible. It is possible to wish ardently, and yet be incapable of abandoning vice. This was my case. I entered my own house with the feelings of a criminal, and could have wished the earth to cover me when I heard Churchill’s voice as he hastened to meet me. I involuntarily stood still. He approached, and when he saw me, he only sighed, or rather groaned, and exclaimed, ‘It is as I feared!’

“ ‘Good night, then, Churchill,’ said I, ‘or rather farewell.’ I entreated him to leave me. ‘Nothing you can say can now make me change,’ said I. ‘The die is cast. I must abide by the consequences. The loss of your friendship I expect, Churchill; I deserve to lose it.’

“ Churchill attempted to speak, but his emotion overpowered him. He looked at me with an expression almost of agony. At last, grasping my hand, ‘You do not know me, Dunallan. I pity you from my inmost soul. The chains of vice gall and torture you a thousand times more than breaking them would: But *I* cannot convince you of this.’ He then left me. I could not go to bed, or sleep. I watched, in misery, until, at an early hour in the morning, I heard the carriage stop which was to convey my best and truest friend from me, perhaps for ever. I determined to see him once more, and went to his apartment. I found him looking calm and serene.

“ ‘Farewell, dear Dunallan,’ said he, with even more than his usual kindness. ‘I shall write you whenever I get home. Write to me, I entreat you; write with your former confidence; forget what has passed since I came to town.’

“ I observed that there was no appearance of his having been in bed.

“ ‘Churchill,’ said I, ‘have you not slept?’

“ ‘No, I could not sleep.’

“ ‘Nor have you been in bed?’

“ ‘No, Dunallan; I could only think of you, and pray for you.’ He clasped me affectionately to his heart, and hurried away.

“ I felt, when I heard his carriage drive rapidly from my door, as if I had been abandoned to evil. Churchill had succeeded, if not in reclaiming me from vice, at least in fixing a dagger in my conscience. I endeavoured to overcome or forget it. I endeavoured to banish thought, but in vain. If I did succeed at times, it returned loaded with more gloom than ever. Aspasia tried every effort to sooth and amuse me; and when I was with her, I sometimes forgot that I was unhappy; and her harp and her voice charmed the gloom away. But, at other times, when I saw her in the pride of beauty, and of talents, and of charms, without apparently one feeling of disquiet, Churchill’s words would return to my memory— ‘a prosperous, admired, and deluded adulteress!’ and the odiousness of the character for a moment dispelled her charms, but only for a moment. I still loved her, but my love was mingled with the most wretched feelings. I felt a gloomy pleasure in indulging to the utmost the harassing thoughts which filled my soul. I have gazed at Aspasia

while she touched her harp and sung to me. I have entreated her to continue to sing that I might still gaze; and while she sought to charm me, and I admired the perfection of her beauty, my imagination pictured the fair forehead—the blue veins in the transparent temples and cheek—the eyes so full of soul, so softly beautiful, with their dark fringes—the mouth so perfect—the whole form so delicate, so lovely. I have pictured them all in the grave—cold, stiff, blackened, food for the worm, mouldering to decay.

“Churchill wrote frequently to me, and I still loved his letters, and longed for them. I wrote to him also, and fully described the gloomy state of my feelings. He strongly recommended occupation. I believe he feared the effect on my intellects from the gloomy feelings I indulged. By his advice I got into Parliament. My father was delighted with my wishing it, and supplied me amply with money, while the party amongst whom I lived easily pointed out a situation where that would procure my election. In this advice Churchill showed his usual wisdom. The manly sentiments, the universal information, the patriotism which I at least heard expressed, formed a painful contrast with the idle, useless, unmanly life in which I indulged. I began again to feel some interest in existence. I had found a motive

for exertion strong enough to excite me to it. I read, and studied, and devoted myself to politics with an eagerness that delighted my party. I spoke, and, as a young man, was listened to with indulgence, and even applause. Elated with success, I willingly undertook to be the mouth of the party in bringing forward a motion on a subject which it was expected would excite much discussion. I introduced this motion with a speech which I had taken every pains to prepare. It was received with all the approbation my most sanguine friends had led me to hope; and I was flattered by one of the most highly distinguished members on the opposite side rising to answer it. He complimented me on my ingenuity and eloquence, but soon convinced even myself that I knew and had studied but one side of the argument. I turned to a friend near me, 'We are lost,' whispered I. 'Lost! why? do not fear.' He rose immediately, and gave so different a gloss to all I had said, that my opponent seemed to have been arguing all along against a shadow of his own creating; and after many speeches had involved the matter in utter confusion, the debate was adjourned to the next day. Frequent scenes such as this disgusted me with politics. My sensibility to all that was wrong in others seemed to increase with my insensibility to my own faults;

and the corruption and subjection of every principle to party politics, and the worthlessness of men in power, or seeking power, were the subjects of many keen invectives in my letters to Churchill. In one of his to me about this time, after replying to all my observations on human character, with his usual want of surprise at all I had said, and asking me if it did not prove those very principles to be true which I had at college combated as throwing a degrading stigma on human nature, he mentioned at the end of his letter, that he had been confined to the house for a fortnight by a severe cold. His regret at not being able to fulfil his pastoral duties during that period, was expressed in terms which I thought, from their extreme warmth, a part of that enthusiasm which I had learned to disregard in him, and passed it over with perfect indifference. I read with more anxiety what he said respecting his health, but understood that he was now recovered. He entered, however, in this letter, more warmly into his own principles than he had ever before done to me; but I hurried with indifference over this part of what he had written, and never again thought of it. A few weeks after this, on returning to Aspasia one evening after a political dinner, she held a letter up before me.

“ ‘What am I to think of this?’ said she playfully: ‘A letter from a lady.’

“ ‘For me?’ asked I, holding out my hand for it.

“ ‘Yes,’ replied she, still holding it from me.

“ It was addressed in a small female hand.

“ ‘I do not know the writing, Aspasia.’

“ ‘Ah! then shall I open it?’

“ ‘Certainly; if you choose.’

“ ‘You seem so perfectly innocent,’ replied she, ‘that I have lost all curiosity;’ and she gave me the letter.

“ I broke the seal. The writing within was Churchill’s; but so changed! The truth flashed upon me. ‘Churchill is gone!’ exclaimed I, in agony.

“ ‘Oh no! you may be mistaken; let me read this letter,’ said Aspasia, laying her hand upon it.

“ ‘You!’ exclaimed I, snatching it as from pollution.

“ I with difficulty read the few first lines.

“ ‘I fear I have not sufficiently prepared you, Dunallan, for our long—our last separation.’ I could read no farther. I looked in dread to the conclusion of the letter. It ended with his farewell. ‘Farewell, my dearest of friends; before you receive this I shall probably know that state where all become secret. Could I return to con-

vince you of the truth ! Oh ! Dunallan, thoughts of you cloud my soul unspeakably more, the more real and near an immortal state approaches. Would to God I could see you once more !

“ ‘ It may be possible ! ’ exclaimed I, rushing past Aspasia, who stood watching my perturbed gestures.

“ ‘ Where do you fly to, Edward ? ’ exclaimed she, seizing my arm.

“ I flung her from me, and hurried, almost distracted, to my lodgings.

“ In a few minutes I was on the road to Churchill’s. The horses flew along as rapidly as possible ; yet I urged on the men with a vehemence that seemed to terrify my servant, whom I had ordered to accompany me, without telling him the cause. I told him, and the poor fellow’s grief was so great as to attract my notice, even at that moment. He had been with me ever since I went to college ; and, like every one else, loved Churchill with a warmth which no other being excited.

“ I shall not describe my misery during this journey, my dearest Catharine. I travelled on in this wretched state, with all the rapidity possible, till near sunset on the second day, when we arrived at the village near Churchill’s residence. I stopt to inquire the way to it ; an old man approached the carriage, and putting his head close

to the widow, asked, in a respectful but melancholy tone of voice, if I had meant to go there; ‘For, perhaps you do not know, Sir, the family are in great distress.’

“ I could not speak; my servant asked, ‘Is Mr. Churchill gone?’

“ ‘No; but——’

“ I got out of the carriage; and, following the old man’s direction, soon reached a house at a short distance. A number of people stood round the gate, and some near the house, their countenances expressive of the deepest sorrow and anxiety. I hurried through them; a respectable-looking elderly woman stood at the entrance into the house, and answered, in a low and distressed voice, the inquiries of the people. I listened. ‘Mr. Churchill is no better,’ I heard her say. I told her who I was, and asked if I could be admitted to see him.

“ She looked at me with surprise, and then conducted me into a small parlour near the door, where, in a short time, a youth came to me who resembled Churchill, but whom grief seemed to render unable to speak. He motioned me to follow him, and we entered the room where my friend lay, pale and emaciated, but his countenance expressive of the elevation and peace which reigned within. I stood still and gazed at him

for a moment. He smiled, and held out his hand to me.

“ ‘ Be composed, dear Dunallan. I have much to say to you. I entreat you, do not rob me of the little strength left me by exciting any emotion. Will you leave us for a short time, my dear Madam?’ said he to a lady who sat by his bed.

“ She left the room accompanied by the youth. Churchill looked after them, and sighed deeply. ‘ My poor mother !’

“ I entreated him to prove to me that I had not lost his friendship, by suffering me, if possible, to do away any thing with regard to his mother which could excite his anxiety.

“ He shook his head. ‘ No human power can do away what I dread her affection will suffer at my death, Dunallan; but no more of this.’ He attempted to regain his composure, but could not; and when I saw him moved, I could no longer control my grief, and throwing myself on his bed, gave vent to the agony I endured. Churchill put his arm round me, and pressed me affectionately to him. For a short time neither of us spoke; at last Churchill said, in a low calm voice,

“ ‘ Look, Dunallan, at that scene !’

“ I raised my head, and turned to where he pointed; it was to the window opposite his bed, from whence was seen a bright and glorious sunset.

“ ‘ Well, Churchill,’ replied I, turning from it, ‘ I see it, and I hate its beams.’

“ He sighed deeply. ‘ You hate all light, Dunallan; you fly from it, and in flying from it, you fly from the only source of happiness; for a mind in darkness must be a wretched one. My friend, will you never believe me?’

“ ‘ I do believe you, Churchill. I do believe that a dark, and gloomy, and guilty mind, must be wretched. I must believe it, because I feel it; but you never knew it, Churchill. You may love that light which you yourself resemble. Your ‘ path has shone,’ in the language of your scriptures, ‘ brighter and brighter to the perfect day,’ and must, like that sun, set in glory, without knowing the misery of guilt, or the impossibility of returning from it.’

“ ‘ Do you really think me so perfect, Dunallan?’

“ ‘ I do from my soul, Churchill. *You* surely have no fears—no dread. If there is a God, he must reward a life like yours with the purest bliss.’

“ ‘ Stop, my friend, you shock me!’ exclaimed Churchill; ‘ let me tell you why I have no fear—no dread—for my soul *is* in perfect peace, not as you suppose from a consciousness of innocence. Had I nothing but that, or even the highest de-

gree of perfection to which any human being ever attained, I should not feel myself in a state to enter the presence of that Being whose character is described in revelation. Our ideas of perfection, my dear Dunallan, are miserably low and erroneous. We form them from comparing human beings with human beings, not from comparing our hearts and lives with those pure laws which revelation teaches are the only standard of perfection. To that standard which reaches the thoughts and motives of the inmost recesses of the soul, no being ever attained. My heart and life, my dear Dunallan, cannot bear to be tried by that standard, and from such a trial I should shrink without a ray of hope. No heart, no life can bear it, but His, who descended from heaven, and took our nature, that He might in our place fulfil, in heart and life, every precept of that all-perfect law. He it is, Dunallan—He who offers his salvation to you—to me—to all who ask it—who, while on our earth, used this touching style of reproach: ‘Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life.’ He it is in whom is all my trust—all my hopes of happiness, and of complete freedom from every taint of mortal impurity. I long to know that state, Dunallan. I long to put off this weak, sinful, dark mortality, which separates my soul from Him who is near me, and around me,

and within me : Him, whom having not seen I love, and feel a joy in loving that is unspeakable ! He seemed lost in his own feelings, and his fine countenance looked more than human.

“ ‘ Can this be delusion ! ’ thought I, as I gazed at him. He soon recollected himself.

“ ‘ Dunallan, ’ said he, ‘ do you still admire the morality of the New Testament ? ’

“ ‘ I do, Churchill. ’

“ ‘ And His character who is there described ? ’

“ ‘ Most assuredly I do. ’

“ ‘ Then, Dunallan, answer me candidly ; why are you not a Christian ? ’

“ I hesitated. ‘ I do not say, Churchill, that I am not a Christian ; but indeed, if the morality of the New Testament is necessary to being one, I may fairly own, that to me it is impracticable. ’

“ ‘ It is necessary, my friend, but it is so as an effect : the great end of Christianity is to purify the heart, to renovate the powers of the soul, and to give a new principle of life ; but we must believe in Him who is the source of this principle of life ; we must come to Him to receive it, before we can obey the pure precepts of Christianity ; just (as He himself illustrates the subject) as the branch must receive nourishment from the vine before it can produce fruit. If you really believe in Him, you must love Him ; and if you love, you will, you

must obey; but the love and obedience are both his gifts.'

" 'My dear Churchill,' replied I, 'I wish from my inmost soul I could comprehend you, but I do not—I cannot—and you are exhausted,' (for an hectic flush glowed on his cheek, and he spoke with difficulty.) 'Spare yourself, my dearest friend—just prescribe to me:—I promise to do whatever you desire me, if a being so weak dare promise. I shall not return to Aspasia—that charm is, I hope, broken for ever.' He pressed my hand in his with affectionate warmth.

" 'Dear Dunallan, I trust implicitly in every promise you make at this moment. You remove the only real grief which embittered my last moments. Promise me also to read this volume,' added he, laying his hand on a Bible which lay on his bed, 'promise to read it with attention. I have constantly thought of you while reading it, ever since I knew you, Dunallan:—You will find that I have attempted to answer those objections which I supposed might arise in your mind.' The book was interleaved, and full of his writing.

" 'What unwearied friendship!' exclaimed I. 'Oh Churchill, what will life be without it!'

" He was moved, but struggled to suppress his emotion. I felt an indescribable desolation of heart.

“ ‘ One duty I must remind you of,’ said Church-ill, after a short pause. ‘ Poor Aspasia !’ I gazed at him—he continued, looking steadfastly but mildly at me. ‘ You ought not in reality—in justice, to regard her with any feelings but those of pity. Your education, my friend, made it impossible for you to be so guilty without remorse and misery. Aspasia seems to be insensible to the nature of her crime. Her mind appears to be in utter darkness—and her heart follows the bent of its passions, without any check from a conscience in which there seems to be no light,—at least this is your description of her, Dunallan ; if it is just, I fear there is little hope of reaching that conscience, while she is surrounded by the illusions of flattery ;—but when her day of adversity comes, my dear Dunallan, remember that her soul too is immortal ; and that, as you have assisted in drawing her into guilt, every consideration binds you to leave no means untried to save her from destruction. Perhaps her separation from you may prove that day of adversity to her :—you ought to rejoice if it does, provided she returns to virtue, and if you can be the means of showing her the path to it. I hope, Dunallan, you will soon learn this secret yourself ;—I hope you will soon know Him, whom to know is eternal life—whom to know is rest, purity, peace,

light, happiness, inexpressible! inconceivable! He seemed again lost in feelings, which appeared too powerful for his weak frame, and which gave his countenance an expression of joy so heartfelt, and of peace so profound, that I felt almost willing at that moment to suffer the beloved spirit to depart. His eyes again fell on me, and he smiled with his usual sweet serenity.

“ ‘ My dear Dunallan, I cannot describe to you the happiness I enjoy at this moment.’

“ ‘ And yet, Churchill, you seem to be in pain, and breathe with such difficulty ——.’

“ ‘ O! that is nothing!’ interrupted he, ‘ let my breathing be still tighter, and my pulse flutter on; I now wish for no delay. There was but one care which hung so heavy on my soul, I shrunk from death. I had no faith to cast it on his mercy, who in this precious volume invited me so to do; and he has in his gentleness condescended to show me ere I depart, that he is the hearer of prayer. My beloved Dunallan, you were that painful heavy care, and you have been brought to me. You have promised to abandon that course which was leading you to everlasting darkness. You have promised to study this volume, which will guide you to that state to which I now hasten. I have no farther fears. My gracious, my glorious Master will accomplish the

renovation of your spirit. We shall meet in his kingdom. Tell my dear Walderford all this. He laments that he cannot be with me; tell him I die in perfect peace. My mother has placed the treasure of her heart in heaven; her earthly provision is sure,—she will lead her children in her steps. I know who is to be appointed to succeed me in the charge of my people. I know he will feel a still deeper interest than I did in their everlasting concerns. My friend is reclaimed! Gracious Lord, I thank thee!’ He sunk back quite exhausted; I thought he was gone, and rang violently, then raised and supported him on my breast.

“His mother entered, accompanied by a woman whose countenance expressed the deepest grief; they were both greatly alarmed; but though Churchill could not speak, he smiled, and motioned to them to approach.

“‘Let me relieve you,’ said his mother to me.

“‘No, no,’ said Churchill faintly; he seemed pleased to lean his head on my breast. He took his mother’s hand, and attempted to speak, but could not.

“‘You need repose, my dear Edmund,’ said she.

“‘I *feel* repose,’ replied he, in a low voice.

“‘Thank God, you always do, Edmund.’

“ ‘Suffer me, dear Madam, to watch his repose,’ said I, dreading to be torn for a moment from him.

“ She looked at me, and then at him, and attempted to smile, but burst into tears.

“ ‘I believe I must be left with you, nurse,’ said Churchill to the woman who had entered with his mother, ‘and attempt to recover a little strength for one more evening service with you all.’

“ I reluctantly yielded my precious charge, and followed Mrs. Churchill to an apartment where her family were assembled. It was a numerous one; the youth whom I had already seen, and six boys and girls still younger.

“ ‘Are all these the brothers and sisters of Churchill?’ asked I.

“ ‘All but this boy,’ replied Mrs. Churchill, ‘he is my child, and Edmund’s brother by adoption; he is an orphan.’ She introduced them all to me by name. ‘Edmund has been brother, and father, and tutor, and friend, to them all,’ added she.

“ Mrs. Churchill spoke with composure, but the children could not restrain their feelings. George, the eldest, left the room; and the orphan boy threw himself on the floor, and hiding his face, wept bitterly.

“ ‘Poor George,’ said his mother, ‘he can appreciate his brother’s character: I know not how he will bear——’ she stopt; but recovering herself, said, ‘God can give strength suited to our day of weakness.’

“ Grief soon does away all ceremony; we were in a short time perfectly intimate, and I felt a sweet pleasure in having the little brothers and sisters of Churchill in my bosom, and hanging upon me. Mrs. Churchill spoke quite freely to me; and when George returned, and saw that we all wept, he staid and gave vent to his grief also without control.

“ Churchill soon sent for us; his countenance brightened on our entrance, but he appeared extremely ill. All gathered round his bed, and the children seemed to have their particular places near him. The youngest slipt down from my arms, climbed upon his bed, and, getting as near him as she could, put her little face close to his. He smiled, and kissed the little rosy cheek, then looked round on all the children with an expression of melancholy pleasure. The servants entered, but turned away their faces when they saw the pale looks of their young master, and the little head that leant upon him. His poor nurse sunk upon her knees, and concealed her face upon his bed. Mrs. Churchill, pale as marble,

sat with her eyes fixed upon her son. He, with great difficulty, prayed a few short but fervent sentences for those around him, then looking at me, and faintly smiling, he said,

“ ‘I cannot express what I wish.’ Then telling George what part of Scripture he desired to have read to him, he looked for a moment at his mother, then at the children, and then at me. I held his hand in mine; it was cold, and the pulse fluttering. He pressed mine feebly, then turning away his face, laid his other hand on his eyes, and seemed to listen with the deepest attention. When George read that passage from our Lord’s prayer on the eve of his sufferings, ‘Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am,——’ Churchill raised his hand for a moment from his face, and looked towards heaven. A smile of rapture was on his lips; he again covered his eyes; George read on in a broken voice, but he betrayed no farther emotion. His hand at last fell gently from his face. Mrs. Churchill uttered a scream of terror on seeing the pale and fixed look; he did not hear it; the pure spirit was at last free.

“ I will not, my dear Catharine, describe the scene that followed—indeed I cannot. Mrs. Churchill was a Christian, and had the supports of one. I had no support, and nature and rea-

son yielded for a short time to the agony of my feelings ; thank Heaven, it was but for a short time.

“ It was morning when the confusion of my ideas began to subside, and the dreadful truth gradually returned to my recollection. I started from the bed where I had been laid, and perceiving my poor worn-out servant asleep, I softly left the room, determining once more to look on that beloved countenance, in which I had so long read the soul of Churchill. I saw a door half open, and entered the room ; but could scarcely believe I was in the apartment of my departed friend. There was none of the mockery of death, all was as if nothing unusual had happened. A window was open, into which had strayed the flowering branch of a white lilac that grew against it, and now filled the apartment with its perfume. I hoped I had only been dreaming of misery, and approached the bed. The curtains were closed ; but, on gently drawing them aside, I felt the reality of my wretchedness when I discovered Churchill’s mother leaning over his pale corpse. She started on seeing me, but held out her hand with a smile that resembled Churchill’s.

“ ‘ He is still himself,’ said she, turning again to gaze on his countenance ; ‘ how placid ! how profoundly peaceful ! I would not bring him

back for a thousand worlds. Oh, God, only permit me soon to follow him ! Yet I am wrong in this wish ; but I feel so helpless now when that countenance which used to animate my heart is so still !' she shuddered ; ' Oh, God, support me !'

“ I shall not attempt to describe the day that followed this morning, my dear Catharine, nor the waking of the morning after. Mrs. Churchill's composure when I met her on this second morning surprised me. It was at the door of my friend's apartment ; she had locked it, but held the key to me smiling faintly.

“ ‘ You wish again to view that forsaken cottage of clay ; the spirit is now gone, indeed ; we must form new ideas of his state, and learn how to follow him there. May God give you the support he has bestowed on me,’ added she, ‘ it is sufficient even for the widow and the childless !’

“ There was an expression almost of delight in her countenance as she spoke.

“ ‘ Will you join us soon ?’ she asked, as we parted ; I promised, and left her, almost deprecating any support which seemed to me so unnatural.

“ ‘ And can the mother of Churchill so soon desire to mourn without the bitterness of grief for him !’ thought I, as I entered his silent room, and, with a sickness of heart uncovered the pale

face of my friend. She had said right; the impression of his exalted spirit had left its earthly tenement; the features, though still beautiful, bore only the straitened character of death. I remained contemplating his changed countenance with the most wretched and gloomy feelings, till I was interrupted by some one tapping softly at the door of the room. I went to it, and found one of the little sisters of my friend.

“ ‘Mamma sent me to fetch you,’ said the little thing in a whisper; but though there was an expression of concern on her infantine countenance, it bore the bloom of health and peace, and she smiled when she invited me to go with her.

“ ‘So you also have learnt not to feel, little creature,’ said I reproachfully to the child, and putting away the little hand she had laid on mine. She looked hurt and abashed at my reproof, but said nothing, and lingered behind me. After going a few steps I turned to make up for my harshness to the sweet child. She had stolen into her brother’s room. I softly followed, and perceived her, with an expression of fondness, press her little cheek to his.

“ ‘So you still love your brother,’ said I.

“ ‘This is not Edmund now,’ replied the child; Edmund is in heaven, and this is only the house in which his soul lived; and Mamma says this

body must be laid under the turf and flowers beside Papa's to sleep for a long, long time, till Papa and Edmund return to them again, when they shall awake and go to heaven too—and Edmund is quite, quite happy now.'

“ ‘And was Edmund not happy before?’ asked I.

“ The child hesitated,—then said, as if she told me something very sacred, and looking mournfully at the pale countenance as she spoke,—‘ I think not quite, for I have seen him weep.’

“ ‘Weep!’ repeated I.

“ ‘Yes. When he used to bring me into this room, and bolt the door, and kneel down, and make me kneel down beside him, and then pray to God; he sometimes wept when he said,—Oh God! be a Father to this child, and teach her to know thee,—and then he used to take me into his bosom, and speak to me about God; and he used to do this with us all.’

“ I could not stand this, and exclaimed aloud, ‘ Oh! God of this house, be my God!’ I started at my own prayer; my whole character flashed on my recollection. An adulterer! against conviction; against the strongest remonstrances of him who now lay before me—impossible! I attempted to overcome the feelings the innocent recital of the child had inspired, and to recal my

former opinions respecting Churchill's religion. 'It was enthusiasm,' thought I, 'a happy superstition, natural to innocent and glowing minds;' but I could not convince myself. 'I must be laid where he is ere I know;—and then—but whatever is then disclosed, this world is now a hateful blank to me,' thought I, as I turned away from the cold remains of the being on earth I had most really loved.

“ I joined Mrs. Churchill and her young group. She still appeared composed; but when we were all seated as she wished, and she attempted to preside as usual, her composure entirely forsook her. She struggled however with her emotion, and at last so far overcame it as to do all she wished, though she spoke none.

“ After an almost untasted breakfast mixed with tears, and audible sobs, Mrs. Churchill, pale as death, and scarcely daring to trust her voice to say a few words, gave each of the elder children some occupation necessary in their mournful circumstances. She then held out some letters to me, and said hurriedly,

“ ‘ Will the task be too painful? I cannot answer all the letters and inquiries I have received. Will you assist me?’

“ I immediately took them, and sat down to my melancholy task. I was surprised at the num-

ber, and deep interest of the inquiries respecting my departed friend. How could he in that remote corner, and in so short a time, have acquired so many, and such warm friends? How could he have obliged so many; for each letter expressed the deepest consciousness of obligation, as well as the most earnest anxiety for his recovery?

“ ‘ Before Mr. Churchill came to this neighbourhood,’ said one, ‘ I had sought for happiness in vain. The phantom still seemed at a distance, though I imagined that I possessed all that was necessary to bring it to my bosom. He taught me where to seek it, and how to find it, and now I thirst after a delusion no longer, but possess the reality, or at least know its source.’

“ ‘ Mr. Churchill,’ said another, ‘ though young enough to be my grandchild, is my spiritual father; and is he to go before me! Would to God I might lay down my useless age in the grave, to preserve him to his family, and his people! but our irreparable loss will be his unspeakable gain.’

“ ‘ Assure Mr. Churchill,’ said another, ‘ that his unwearied kindness, and forbearance, and gentleness, has not been so entirely thrown away on me as I fear he suspects. He knows I love him; but he thinks I hate the strictness of his

virtues; but it is for them I really love him; and though he knows it not, he has never recommended a book to me that I have not read with my deepest attention; nor warned me against an opinion that I have not immediately suspected its soundness; nor given me an advice that I have not at least attempted to follow; nor a reproof that did not bind my affections closer to him.'

“Such passages were in every letter. Many seemed to be from people of the lower classes. Mrs. Churchill wished them all to be replied to respectfully and kindly; and that those who had so highly valued the principles taught by her son, should be made acquainted with their complete efficacy, in supporting him through his last moments.

“This was a painful day; I would have shrunk from every thing but indulgence of my grief; but I felt ashamed of being weaker than the mother who had lost her support, and first earthly hope; and was left to struggle alone with both grief and cares. She gave herself no indulgence.

“On the fourth day my beloved friend's remains were laid in the grave—a scene so mournful, I do not wish to recall it; yet it showed me still more fully how Churchill had been beloved. In-

deed this impression is almost all I recollect; for in attempting to suppress my own emotions before so many witnesses, I was incapable of observing what passed around me. One circumstance I will recall. When the service was over, and the coffin was lowered into its narrow house, an old man, with his gray head uncovered, read aloud what was marked on the lid—‘Aged twenty-four,’ and clasping his withered hands, exclaimed, ‘He is laid low, and an old cumberer of the ground is left! But thou doest all things aright,’ added he, raising his eyes dimmed with tears to heaven. Poor George, the brother of my friend, whose composure hitherto had surprised me, at the exclamation of the old man, joined to the chilling sound of the mould thrown on the coffin, fainted, and fell lifeless into my arms. The poor youth was carried away, but I could not go until I had seen the last melancholy duties concluded. When all was over, a young man, of very graceful appearance, whom I had not before observed, approached, and, with a look of much emotion and concern, offered his arm to me. I felt very faint, and gladly accepted the stranger’s kindness. We lingered at the grave after all was finished, indeed every one seemed reluctant to leave the spot. At last we slowly turned from the narrow abode of my friend, my counsellor,

my all. The young stranger walked with me to the entrance of Mrs. Churchill's house. He inquired with great interest about her, and her young family; and attempted to say something regarding his acquaintance with Churchill, but was soon too much affected to proceed. On taking leave, he named himself to me—the Mr. Clanmar, whom, my dear Catharine, you are acquainted with. We had known each other as children, but since that time we had not met. He was now on a visit to a maternal uncle in that part of England. His manners and sympathy were pleasing to me, and we parted mutually desiring to meet again.

“ I had nothing now to detain me at ——, but an earnest desire to be useful if possible to the mother of my friend. She was perfectly open with me on every subject; but though I found that the independence Churchill had deemed secured to his mother, was extremely limited, her spirit was too like that of her son for any one to presume even to insinuate a wish to interfere in her private concerns. She saw, however, that I was dissatisfied with what she told me of her circumstances and future plans, and said, smiling sadly—

“ ‘ You will often, I hope, Mr. Dunallan, be able to judge for yourself, whether we are com-

fortable. You, I am sure, will not forget us. Perhaps,' added she, 'you think me proud. I read in your countenance that you do, and I fear I must confirm you in that opinion of me, when I assure you that nothing would be more painful to me, than any attempt, either open or disguised, to deprive me of that feeling of independence, which perhaps I value too highly, but which has been made dear to me by peculiar circumstances. You, Mr. Dunallan, will not condemn me, I believe, for having preferred these circumstances to any other, with such a companion as Edmund's father, when I tell you that your departed friend greatly resembled, and, excellent and amiable as he was, did not excel that father in any quality of the head or heart. I married Mr. Churchill, not against the consent of my family, for he would not have married me on such terms; but their consent was mixed with disappointment and pity, and a dread of our becoming dependent. Thank God, that has not hitherto, in the slightest degree, been the case—less so than even those very friends have wished. They asked my children from me, when they saw them so lovely and engaging. They wished to adopt our Edmund, but his father would never consent to part with one of his treasures, or for any worldly advantage remove them from the in-

fluence of those principles which he thought more valuable than all that the world offered without them. Edmund pursued his father's wishes—indeed they were his own; and to this moment we have been wholly independent of friends. I wish to continue so. I trust I shall be enabled to lead my children aright. This now is the use of my existence. When it is accomplished, I shall be permitted to depart, and be with those who have the best and greatest share of my poor affections.'

“ I could say nothing to all this. There remained only one means of showing my love and esteem for my departed friend,—the poor consolation of marking the spot where he lay; and even this was denied me by the affectionate ardour of his parishioners, who had requested his mother's permission, on the day of his funeral, to erect a monument to his memory and usefulness among them; and I was only permitted to be a sharer in this last tribute of affection.

“ I prepared to leave ——, and to go, I knew not whither, and I cared not. I detested the idea of home, and determined not to go where it was possible I should meet Aspasia. All other parts of the creation were alike to me. Clanmar was much with me the few days I remained at ——. He, however, had no power as yet to

engage my attention or affections. I became every moment more abstracted, and only longed for solitude wherever I could find it. Clanmar wished to travel. He proposed it to me. I liked the plan, because I would have liked any change; but the idea of his being with me did not please me; yet he was so feelingly attentive to me, so considerate and indulgent to my humour, that I could not help being grateful, and agreed to do as he wished. He seemed delighted, and immediately set off for London to make every necessary preparation. I took a melancholy leave of Mrs. Churchill, and her sweet and interesting family, the night after Clanmar's departure, and left her house very early in the morning after—a beautiful morning in spring. All was in complete contrast to my feelings—all looked smiling and gay. The fields were fresh and beautiful. The birds, the children, as I passed their cottages, all seemed only awakened to happiness. Even Churchill's grave, when I went for the last time to lay my aching head and breast upon it, was gilded by the rays of a bright morning sun; but no gloom was ever near him.

“It was towards evening when I stopt at a small inn in the little town of ——. My thoughts during this solitary day had been most painfully gloomy. Like all who are young in misfortune,

I felt as if heaven had marked me out for suffering; and the gay appearance of nature around me seemed to mock at the grief that was inflicted: while recollections of Churchill, his ardent affection, his wise and gentle admonitions, his friendship so tried, so perfect, lost to me for ever, overwhelmed my exhausted and rebellious spirit.

“Gloomy and miserable, I followed my conductor to a little parlour of the inn, and, desiring that I might not be disturbed, continued to pursue my wretched thoughts. The noise of the house did not interrupt me, but that of a carriage driving rapidly into the court did. I dreaded meeting any one I knew, and impatiently approached the window to discover if I had any cause for this fear. It was an open carriage, in which there were two ladies and a gentleman. One lady’s face was turned away, but I knew the figure too well, and started back from the window. It was Aspasia. I cannot describe the confusion of my feelings—my promise to Churchill—recollections of Aspasia—friendship—honour—tenderness—yet my first impulse was to fly from her. But I dared not venture to pass near her carriage. I had promised never again to see her. The expression of heavenly joy which animated Churchill’s countenance when I made that promise, was

again before me, and the scenes that followed. I became calm, and determined to remain where I was till she departed, and then hasten to where I should have no dread of ever beholding her. I waited in anxious expectation to hear the carriage drive away, but in vain; and I began to dread an intention on her part to remain at the inn during the night, and determined, should that be the case, to leave the house as soon as I possibly could, without being seen by Aspasia. But a more severe exertion than flight was destined for me. After listening anxiously to every sound, for what appeared to me a tedious length of time, my servant entered, and presented me with Aspasia's card, saying, 'The lady was in a parlour below, that she could only stay for a few moments, and desired to see me.'

" 'And who informed the lady that I was here?' asked I, angrily.

" She had seen my servant, and recognised him.

" I felt myself a coward. I dared not go to Aspasia. I dared not trust myself to see her; indeed, I had promised I never would. I could not send a message. I dreaded the effects, should I suddenly break to her my intention to part from her for ever. I hesitated in a state almost beside myself, but hearing a noise below, and

dreading that she herself might come in search of me, I desired my servant to admit no person whatever, and hurriedly wrote the following few words to Aspasia:—

“ ‘ I cannot see you, Aspasia. If you knew how I am changed you would not wish to see me; my most ardent desire is, that you should forget my miserable existence. I shall soon write to you more fully—quite fully. In the mean time spare me.’

“ I sealed my note and sent it, desiring my servant to follow me as soon as he could get horses, and determined to leave the inn on foot to escape the possibility of meeting Aspasia. I had to pass the parlour where she was, and approached it softly. What poor and shrinking creatures guilt makes us! I heard her voice exclaim,

“ ‘ What! a note! where is Mr. Dunallan?’

“ ‘ Gone, madam,’ replied my servant. I started at the happy falsehood.

“ ‘ Gone! gone! how! impossible!’ exclaimed Aspasia.

“ ‘ My master has left the house on foot,’ replied my servant, whom I never before detected in a falsehood, ‘ and has ordered me to follow with the carriage as soon as I can get horses.’

“ I thought Aspasia had returned into the parlour, and approached softly to pass the door; she

stood in the entrance, a little turned from me, and was slowly reading my note. I advanced another step; she started, and turned round; I stopt, as if transfixed to the spot; she became deadly pale, but with a look of disdain, waved her hand for me to pass, then regarding me more fixedly, her countenance softened into an expression of pity and tenderness.

“ ‘How changed indeed!’ exclaimed she, looking earnestly at me, and then observing my deep mourning, she burst into tears.

“ ‘Forgive me, Dunallan,’ said she, ‘but why do you shun me? Do you think I am only formed to amuse you in the day of prosperity? You do not know me, Dunallan,’ added she, passionately. ‘I do know you, Aspasia,’ replied I, scarcely daring to trust myself to look at her; ‘I know you are too noble, too generous, too——but this is not a place in which I can explain myself,’ observing people approaching. ‘Come into this room a moment then,’ said she.

“ ‘No, no, I must not, I cannot. I shall write you the instant it is in my power.’

“ ‘But when shall we again meet, Dunallan?’

“ ‘I cannot tell; I will write every thing.’

“ ‘You must not leave me!’ exclaimed she, quite regardless of the people who were collecting

near us, 'you shall not leave me, till you have fixed a time for us to meet again.'

" 'Impossible, I am going abroad.'

" 'Abroad! when? Do you go alone?' asked she eagerly.

" I knew not what reply to make, and, annoyed by the people who gazed at us, I peremptorily ordered them away, then seizing Aspasia's hand, led her into the parlour, and said, as coolly as I could, 'I go abroad immediately; a friend goes with me. We shall not return for some time. Aspasia, we ought, and we must forget each other. But allow me to write, I cannot speak.'

" She could not either, but became excessively pale.

" 'Farewell,' I attempted to say, but could scarcely articulate the word. She bowed coldly. I went towards the door, and opened it, when I was arrested by a deep sob. I turned round, and saw Aspasia just fainting. I flew to her, and received her in my arms as she fell. I gazed at her pale and lovely countenance as it lay deprived of animation; 'and this is my work!' thought I, 'and can it be virtue to leave her to suffer? No, it is cruel, detestable selfishness. I laid her on a sofa, and rang for assistance, and then, regardless of what happened, supported the lifeless form in my arms. The room was soon filled with people,

who looked strangely at me, but I cared not. The lady and gentleman also entered who had been in the carriage with Aspasia. I knew neither. They looked surprised and alarmed, and the gentleman eyed me with looks of suspicion and displeasure, and approaching, haughtily offered to relieve me from my charge.

“ ‘I shall apply for relief when I wish for it,’ replied I, with equal haughtiness, ‘and when I see any one I deem entitled to offer it;’ and then giving orders to those around me to bring assistance, I continued supporting Aspasia until the efforts of the lady who had been her companion restored animation. She opened her eyes, and looked languidly around; but at length fixing them on the gentleman, who, after my angry reply, had stood silent at some distance, she started,

“ ‘My brother! and where is——’ she did not pronounce my name, but, looking eagerly around, she discovered her own situation, and whose arms supported her. An expression of pleasure for a moment brightened her countenance, but instantly changed to alarm on again turning to the now stern aspect of her brother. She started from me, and seizing his hand,

“ ‘Augustus,’ said she, ‘I will explain all this to you;’ then turning to me, ‘Now, my friend,

I shall detain you no longer.' She seemed anxious I should depart.

" Her brother coldly withdrew his hand from hers, and desiring every one to leave the room, as there was no further need of assistance, also with an haughty look included me in the number. The others instantly obeyed; I stood still, returning his haughty looks with interest. Aspasia approached me, and, with an imploring expression of countenance, 'I entreat you to leave me,' said she.

" 'Since *you* wish it, I certainly will, Aspasia, but I remain here this night;' and, throwing my card on the table as I passed her brother, I slowly left the room.

" When again shut up alone in my apartment, I dared not trust myself to think; but, pacing hurriedly from one end to the other of its narrow bounds, repeated to myself an hundred times, 'The die is cast! my fate is determined; I cannot draw back!' When a recollection of Churchill would have returned to me, I repelled it with terror; it brought distraction with it. I continued pacing my room, and listening to every noise, as I expected a messenger from the brother of Aspasia—but none came. Night drew on, and I knew not what to dread or hope. I rang for my servant, and inquired if the party still re-

mained in the house. I was answered in the affirmative; that they had continued shut up together with Aspasia ever since I left them, and had given orders that they should not be disturbed. It was supposed that they would remain for the night. My servant also informed me, that the lady who accompanied Aspasia was the wife of her brother, Colonel Hartford. I knew the character of this lady. I had often heard Aspasia speak of her as one of those plain, sensible, correct women, whom she never could make comprehend what she felt on any subject. I now began to feel for Aspasia more than for myself. What might she not suffer from an angry brother, and a sister so unlike herself! I almost determined to break in upon them, and offer her my protection, but dreaded adding to her difficulties. It was past twelve o'clock when my servant brought me the following note :

“ ‘Colonel Hartford requests a few minutes conversation with Mr. Dunallan at seven o'clock to-morrow morning. Colonel Hartford is aware that any communication from him to Mr. Dunallan would have mutually been more agreeably conveyed by a third person; but the nature of the conversation he alludes to makes that impossible.’

“ I immediately wrote a note consenting to this

meeting, and then returned to my miserable thoughts. From what I had seen of Colonel Hartford, I foresaw that a conversation with him, could only end in a meeting of a more serious nature; such a meeting, for such a cause, must for ever ruin the character of Aspasia, and then every law of honour, and of the world I had lived in, bound me, should I survive, not to abandon her. I groaned in agony as I finished this sketch of the future. Churchill's dying words and looks had mingled with my thoughts, and I again hurriedly paced my chamber, attempting, if possible, not to think at all. I did not go to bed, for I could not sleep, and I dreaded its quiet. At last I recollected that these moments might be the last I should have, as our meeting would not probably be long delayed if Colonel Hartford should feel as I expected he would. I wrote to Aspasia, and to my father, and to Mrs. Churchill, though the last almost deprived me of my little remaining fortitude. As I finished these letters the day began to dawn. It was a fresh and beautiful morning; and I felt, as it brightened, that my thoughts only changed from the deepest gloom to the most overpowering sadness. That sun I had seen gild the grave of my friend the preceding morning, it might soon also gild mine; and should we then meet?

If he had not believed an illusion,—never ! and if he had, all was only uncertainty, and uncertainty brings no peace even to the guilty. If I survived, my broken promise to Churchill would live for ever with me; but Aspasia would not be unhappy, and I should at least suffer alone; each alternative shut out all hope of happiness; I knew not which most to dread. At last I yielded to fatigue, and throwing myself on the bed, slept till my servant called me to meet Colonel Hartford. My short sleep had revived my spirits, and I entered the room where the Colonel waited for me, prepared to meet the haughty and threatening looks with which he had eyed me the evening before. His back was to me as I entered, but when he turned round, I was struck with the change in his appearance; he was now pale, and evidently distressed, though attempting to suppress his feelings. After the door was closed, and a short, and, on his side, an embarrassed pause—

“ ‘Mr. Dunallan,’ said he, ‘I am acquainted with your character, and think that, in our present circumstances, I shall act most wisely by being perfectly open with you.’

“ I bowed, I believe coldly, for I was not prepared for such an address.

“ A slight flush passed across the brow of Colo-

nel Hartford, and he stopped and hesitated. ‘I am not accustomed,’ added he, a little haughtily, ‘to ask favours. I do not well know how to set about it; particularly where ——’ he stopt;

“ ‘Where you have been injured;’ said I; ‘Neither am I accustomed to inflict injuries,’ added I, ‘and I know not how to plead guilty.’

“ Colonel Hartford smiled, though the smile was a sad one.

“ ‘I am right, I perceive,’ said he, ‘and will proceed. Aspasia has confessed her affection for you, Mr. Dunallan,’ added he, looking on the ground, and reddening as he spoke; ‘but she has authorised me to say, that she feels for her family, and will attempt to subdue a passion, the indulgence of which can only end in her and your misery. This, however, I confess, has been extorted from her by entreaties, and every possible means; and, I feel too certain, would yield to one wish of yours.’ The Colonel paused.

“ ‘What do you wish me to do?’ asked I.

“ ‘Mr. Dunallan,’ replied he, ‘I have no reason to suppose my wishes could overcome such feelings as I witnessed yesterday. I would appeal to those feelings, and ask you, if they can

endure seeing the creature you so much love, the victim of shame, and remorse, and guilt?"

"I started, for I perceived that Aspasia's brother was deceived, and supposed her still innocent. He ascribed my change of countenance to another cause.

" 'I see,' said he, 'I speak to one still young in evil as in years.'

"I shook my head, too conscious of his mistake.

" 'You think not. Well, be satisfied with what you know of it; and be assured that guilty pleasures are fatally injurious not only to happiness and to respectability, but even to the powers of the mind, to all that is valuable in this world; and, if there is another—but I go too far. I wished to appeal to your generosity. Aspasia has married into a family very different from her own in all their opinions and sentiments. She has too completely adopted those opinions, which are pernicious in the extreme, and her own family are deeply distressed on this account, for she is beloved by them all. Were she to yield to the influence of the false views of right and wrong which she has adopted with regard to the most sacred of all connexions, she would kill a father whose life has been devoted to his children, and who could not survive their dishonour. She would,—but I shall say no

more; you must understand me, Mr. Dunallan; my meeting you in this humiliating manner, on such a subject, must prove to you the extent of the misery I attempt to avert.' He turned away, almost overcome by emotion.

“ ‘I do understand you, Colonel Hartford, and shall be equally frank with you. I cannot promise never again to see Aspasia, because I dare not trust my own promises. You will believe this, when I tell you, that it is not yet a fortnight since I promised to the friend I most loved on earth, and that friend in his last moments, that I would never again see Aspasia; and though misery must follow the breach of such a promise, I have broken it.’

“ ‘But did you not meet her by accident yesterday?’

“ ‘I did; and attempted to shun her; but when she fainted, and I again found myself near her, I determined to give up all rather than quit her. In intention, at least, I have broken that most sacred promise.’

“ ‘Break it no farther, and you will be able to forgive yourself,’ said Colonel Hartford.

“ ‘And Aspasia—unfortunate.’

“ ‘I know exactly how you will feel regarding her,’ interrupted Colonel Hartford, ‘but all reasoning must be false, Mr. Dunallan, which

supposes a life of guilt can, even in the society of the most beloved object, be a happy one. Leave Aspasia to reflection, and the cares of her family. I assure you they shall be tender cares; and she certainly will be less unhappy than she would be were she guilty.'

" 'I go abroad immediately,' replied I, 'that, I believe, is a better security than my promise. One letter I must write to Aspasia. If I dared, I would say it should be the last.'

" 'Mr. Dunallan,' replied the Colonel, 'I feel secure of your sincerity at least; and see plainly that your own happiness depends on your separation from my unhappy sister.'

" We then parted, and I immediately set off for London. I felt as if I had escaped from destruction; yet I deeply blamed myself for having seen Aspasia, at least I might have avoided much that had happened; and I felt all the degradation of guilt, when I recollected that I had left Colonel Hartford without having undeceived him; yet this I thought, for Aspasia's peace, I could not do. But one crime gradually taints the whole character. An adulterer must overcome his repugnance at being an hypocrite also. I did feel happier, however, and again dared to indulge in recollections of Churchill. I now regarded him as almost my guardian angel; yet I could not ba-

nish thoughts of Aspasia;—most painful, sometimes almost insupportably painful thoughts.

In a few days I embarked with Clanmar for Italy. I do not mean, however, my dear Catharine, to describe to you at present any of those countries through which I wandered for the two following years. My admiration of the beauties of nature, and my thirst for knowledge on every subject, did not abandon me; but they were influenced, for most of that time, by the wretchedness of my feelings.

“ We passed the first six months in Italy. Clanmar was, for a short time, almost as miserable as myself; but his grief was soon over, and he again sought those pleasures and amusements, in which a youth of idleness, and complete indulgence, had led him to seek for happiness. Yet he never forgot his melancholy companion, but sought to draw me into those scenes which he found, at least for a time, dissipated his own melancholy; for Clanmar was formed for higher pursuits, though early neglect had left his uncultivated mind a prey to all the impressions it might receive from books that interested his passions, or amused his idleness, without informing his mind; and from the scenery of a beautiful country, to which he was exquisitely alive. But Clanmar’s amusements and pleasures had no charms for me.

Your sex, my dear Catharine, to whom he was devoted, I shunned, for I felt a melancholy pleasure in sacrificing all the fascinations of their society to the recollection of Aspasia. I had kept my promise with regard to her, and had written but one letter, though her answer to that one had breathed nothing but despairing wretchedness. I had been a hundred times on the eve of returning to England to offer her my love and protection, but was happily deterred by the recollection of Churchill, and of her brother's conversation with me. I however wrote to Colonel Hartford, that he must at least let me hear of her, if he expected me to remain at a distance; and he wrote me with extreme kindness, frankness, and feeling. This correspondence was the only pleasure of my existence. I wandered from one scene of beautiful ruins in that beautiful country to another. I inquired into the nature of the government of each state, and the character of its inhabitants; and all seemed to be, like myself, the wretched remains of something better and greater. Clanmar's pursuit of pleasure, at the expense of every thing else, at times grieved me, but I felt as if it was impossible to decide what was good and what was evil. The time had been, that I could have expatiated to him on the powers of the human mind, and the happiness to be derived from its cultivation;

but that time was over. I felt my own weakness, and pretended not to teach another. When the mind, my dear Catharine, is in this weak, and useless, and gloomy state, I believe it is natural to feel a rebellious displeasure at the Author of our existence; at least I felt this to an extreme degree. When I beheld the profuse beauty of nature, contrasted with the misery and degradation of those for whom it was created, instead of feeling that it was the effect of goodness, it seemed derision. I had read the observations on parts of the Bible, which my ever-lamented Churchill had written for me. I was reading attentively the Bible, also, which he had given me, and because he had loved it I held it sacred, though my mind and feelings still revolted at many parts of it. I, however, became acquainted with its contents, and with its language and style; and had discovered the sources of all Churchill's peculiar opinions. His own observations were short, but powerfully convincing. As yet, however, this volume, so prized by him, had no influence whatever on me.

“ After leaving Italy, we went into Switzerland, and its scenery for a time wholly engrossed both Clanmar's attention and my own. He sought for no other pleasure than that of contemplating it; and I, too, for a time, forgot all other things.

Born and reared amidst mountainous scenery, this had an indescribable power over us. We thought we could have remained for ever with pleasure amongst its sublime and varied beauties. But Clanmar, in a short time, again longed for his usual pleasures and amusements. He went into society in search of them, and left me much alone. My melancholy returned, and I spent eight or nine miserable months almost in solitude. During this time, however, one cause of my unhappiness was removed, though even its removal left a sting of disappointment and bitterness. Aspasia had learned to live without me, and even to be happy. Colonel Hartford had written me regularly, and with the compassionate concern of a father; and his last letters had described Aspasia as the charm of every society, by her powers of conversation, and other attractive graces. I felt certain that Colonel Hartford had always written me the exact truth, and I was forced to believe him on this occasion; but though it was a relief to me to know that Aspasia was not unhappy, I also felt that now there was not a creature on earth who really loved me.

“ It was at this time, my dear Catharine, that my father became urgent with me to return home. You know, my sweet friend, what his wishes were; and you will now understand how little I could

feel disposed, at that time, to look for happiness in a new attachment, or to hope to find that warm and constant affection my heart sighed for in any of your sex. I excused myself to my father, and left Switzerland to remove myself farther from his entreaties.

“ I now endeavoured to forget Aspasia, and happier feelings began to return. Thoughts of ambition and a desire for distinction sometimes resumed their long lost power over me. ‘ What had I done,’ thought I, ‘ to prevent my aspiring to any degree of eminence? What had I done, that any young man in my situation, and with my temptations, would not have done?’ I sometimes felt as if Churchill had led me to think myself more guilty than I really had been: but no feeling of displeasure against him ever gained admittance twice; and when I thought of returning to the world and to active life, my consciousness of weakness made me desire most anxiously to find some principle to guide and strengthen me more powerful than any I yet knew.

“ I determined, therefore, to study again, and more carefully, that system which had so completely influenced my almost perfect friend. I shut myself up for this purpose several hours every day. I studied with my whole attention, and at last, with the assistance of what Churchill

had written for me, I became master at least of the system of religion which he had drawn from the Bible. I had followed him through the whole scriptures, and saw clearly, that this system was supported by every part of them; or, rather, that it was an abstract of the whole spirit of those scriptures. I found that, according to them, man was originally created for the happy purpose of knowing, and serving to glorify the Author of his existence. All his powers and affections were formed for those noble purposes: all his felicity was to flow from the exertion of those powers and affections to those exalted ends. But man had not fulfilled the purposes for which he was brought into existence. He had disobeyed the goodness which had bestowed life upon him, and had perverted his power and capacity of choosing for himself, by offending in the single point in which it was possible for him to do so: he had chosen to know evil, at the known risk of incurring the displeasure of God, and he was justly given over to its influence.

“ Thus far, my dear Catharine, I could acquiesce; but next followed, that the children of our first, unhappy, rebellious parent, inherited his guilt; and though still in possession of the powers, and capacities, and affections at first bestowed on him, these were so influenced by evil,

that though still ardently thirsting for that happiness for which they were originally destined, they sought it every where but from its true and only source, and therefore were continually disappointed.

“Churchill attempted not either to explain or vindicate this doctrine, so difficult to comprehend or reconcile to our ideas of justice. He found it in every part of scripture, and only asked the question, ‘Whether the state of the moral world could be accounted for on other principles?’ I supposed he had been aware that he could not defend this point, and read on; but, on the contrary, I found that upon these principles the whole system was founded, and every page that followed only tended to their illustration. The state of the human mind and heart by nature, I found uniformly represented in scripture as defective in all that is valuable in the sight of heaven, and always deserving of its displeasure; and that deliverance from this displeasure is absolutely necessary, before we can be restored to the favour of our Creator. The means of this deliverance, Churchill pointed out to me, was revealed in the very beginning of the scriptures, and discovered more and more distinctly down till the coming of Him whom, eighteen hundred years after that event, Churchill had loved with the

real and deep conviction of his heart, as his Lord, and Master, and Saviour.

“ This was my beloved Churchill’s religion. He, perfect as I thought him, regarded his own nature as perverted and depraved, and was fully convinced that he required an atonement to expiate his guilt; an holiness to answer for that law broken by him; and a new principle of life to restore the affections of his heart, and the capacities and powers of his mind to their original object and use; and all these, he had often declared to me, before I had attempted to understand him, he had found in the knowledge of that divine Being who is ‘despised and rejected of men,’ till they have sought happiness every where else. ‘But,’ he would add, with the deepest emotion, ‘none who find Him seek farther.’

“ I now knew Churchill’s system, and in some degree understood it, but I knew not how to make it my own. I felt that it did account for the state of my mind and feelings. I had sought happiness in guilty pleasures, in ambition, and in the study of men, of books, and of nature, and I was still wretched. But how was I to find what Churchill pointed out to me? How was I to ascertain that all he had felt was not an illusion?

“ One beautiful evening I had walked out by the lake, my thoughts busily occupied with the

subject I had been studying, and from that cause, even more than usually alive to the beauty and sublime grandeur of the scenery around me. I had got into a solitary recess at the foot of one of the mountains which surrounded the lake, and remained long in this favourite retreat, sometimes deep in thought, sometimes contemplating with rapture the varied beauties which surrounded me. The lake in all its splendour lay before me. The sun poured its bright rays into its bosom.

“ ‘ Oh! that thy Creator would illuminate mine!’ I ardently sighed as I gazed on its brightness; and, bending my knees for the first time since I had knelt at my mother’s lap, I burst into tears.

“ This softness was luxury to a heart which had been so long embittered and rebellious.

“ I attempted to pray, but I knew not how. I wished from my soul I could believe the scriptures, but uncertainty clouded my ideas of the Being before whom I knelt. Yet when I rose, though light had not been poured into my soul, the calmness at least of the lake had entered into it. From that day, my dearest Catharine, light also began to dawn. I read, I reflected, I learnt to pray, and at last found that peace which is past understanding,—that source of happiness

which, as my friend had said, when once found, we seek no farther. The knowledge of which makes all else in comparison wholly valueless.

“ And now, my dearest, sweetest friend, you know all the events, and misery which led to that change in my opinions, which you have so often heard ridiculed.

“ I feel no surprise that it should excite ridicule. How can I, when I recollect the light in which those opinions I have now adopted once appeared to myself?

“ I have little more to say, my sweet friend. From the time I fully comprehended the first principles of the Christian religion, every thing in nature, every thing in society, every feeling, and every power of my heart and mind appeared to me in a new light; but I learnt slowly, and have still much to learn, of the extreme weakness and ignorance of the human mind; and of the perversion of the heart, and the strength of its passions. I have now, however, discovered the source of true knowledge, true virtue, and true strength. That you, my beloved Catharine, should also discover this, is my most ardent and constant prayer.

“ After I had been abroad about three years, I was called to England by the melancholy intelligence that my only sister was thought danger-

ously ill. I hurried to her; but my aunt will tell you her melancholy story, my dearest Catharine. I witnessed in her the powerful and happy influence of those principles I had embraced,—they smoothed her bed of death.

“ We conveyed her from one place to another, in the vain hope that change of air and scene might restore her, but without effect. On our return from —, we stopt at Mrs. Churchill’s, and there my sister became so much worse, that she could not be removed. Mrs. Churchill was a mother to her, and she remained in her house till the last scene was over. Mrs. Churchill rejoiced in my change of sentiments, and in the cheerful, and at times even joyful resignation of my poor sister.

“ Mrs. Churchill’s family had improved under her care in every way. George was at college, the younger children amiable and interesting, and in all the bloom of health, happiness, and peace. Poor Mrs. Churchill looked wonderfully older, grief had made slow but sure ravages in her constitution, resigned and pious as she was.

“ During my stay in England, I met many of my former friends; but, in general, we mutually found each other changed. Walderford and a few others still retained their affection for me, and I became, through Walderford, acquainted

in society in which my newly imbibed principles were understood and valued. Amongst these I formed many friendships; but an unfortunate wish of my father's made me abandon all these, and again leave my country. I need not name this wish to you, my dearest Catharine, but I would explain to you why I felt so averse to fulfilling it, and my chief reason was this:—I had learnt that a promise had been won from you, while a mere child, similar to that which my father had obtained from me. I shall tell you how I became acquainted with this. For a short time after I returned to England, my sister's illness took a more favourable turn, and I took that opportunity to pay an unexpected visit to my father. I found him in the same most unhappy situation in which I had left him, and the more kindly he received me, and the more affection I felt for him, the more distressing was it to witness that situation. I had only been one day at home, when my father returned to his favourite theme—my settling in my own country. He made me the most extravagant offers. I endeavoured to evade giving any answer; but that was impossible, at last I said,

“ ‘ But, my dear father, do you wish to have your son rejected by Miss Dunallan? You describe her as surrounded by the most agreeable

admirers. I have no chance in such a competition.'

" 'Oh,' replied he, 'you are safe; the lady may amuse herself in making conquests, but it is many years since she made a promise never to marry any man but the one chosen by her father.'

" 'Many years!' repeated I, 'Miss Dunallan is still very young.'

" 'She is,' replied my father, 'but Lord Dunallan has taught her to regard her promise as sacred, and she is one of those proud spirits who feel more bound by such engagements, than by the ceremony of marriage itself. There is but one event can break this bond,' added my father, 'and you will read it there,' giving me a letter.

"It was from your father, my dear Catharine, and its contents confirmed all my father had said, and declared that the only thing which could absolve his daughter from her promises, was his permission to make another choice, a permission nothing would induce him to give but the certainty that I wished to decline the connexion.

"I detested this tyranny, and determined as far as I could, consistently with my promise to my father, to give you, my dear Catharine, the power to make a choice for yourself; and in dis-

pleasing your father by delay I supposed that I promoted this plan.

“ After much entreaty I obtained my father’s consent, again to go abroad; for, determined as he was that I should sometime fulfil his wishes, his naturally yielding temper could not resist my importunity in asking delay.

“ I will not conceal from you also, my dear Catharine, since I now can with truth say I was deceived, that I disliked the character I had heard of you; and, believing also that I should be very little suited to your taste, I looked upon our union as the beginning of misery, as far as domestic concerns could produce it, to both of us. I therefore took leave of my friends, and my country, and again became a wanderer.

“ You know, my dearest Catharine, what called me home and what followed. It was during my stay abroad that, at the request of some friends in England, I undertook my present mission. They knew my wish to remain abroad, and that I cared not where, but only longed to make my existence of some use to my fellow-creatures—and now I am banished for I know not how long.

“ I have put you in possession of all my secrets, my sweet friend, shall I add this most true one, that, during my banishment, I look

forward to your letters, to your promised confidence and friendship, as my dearest and most longed for earthly pleasure. Adieu, dearest Catharine, remember your promise of perfect openness with your devoted friend,

“ E. H. DUNALLAN.”

CHAPTER I.

CATHARINE had been so completely absorbed while reading Dunallan's letter, that the time had passed away quite unobserved. She had read it with the most varied feelings. Some parts she scarcely, even after several perusals, understood. Conscious of this, she was again searching for those passages, when to her surprise, she was summoned to meet Mrs. Oswald at dinner. She complied with the summons, but was so absent that she answered at cross purposes whatever was addressed to her. Mrs. Oswald at last gave up all attempts at conversation, and continued to eat her dinner in silence, but soon exclaimed,

“ Oh stop ! don't eat that, my dear.”

“ Why, Madam ?” replied Catharine, starting from her reverie.

“ Because, my love,” said Mrs. Oswald, continuing to laugh, “ you have declined John's offer of sugar, and have completely covered your pudding with salt.”

Catharine blushed and joined in Mrs. Oswald's laugh ; and during the rest of the time she re-

mained in the dining room, she was tolerably present to what passed.

After dinner Mrs. Oswald said she had a short letter to write, and Catharine had again engaged herself as deeply as ever with the contents of Dunallan's packet when obliged to meet Mrs. Oswald at tea. Now, however, there were no servants present, and she avowed the cause of her absence of thought. Mrs. Oswald seemed to enter quite into her feelings, and rising in her quick way after tea, said,

“Good bye, my dear, I shall be busy till we meet at prayers, and I believe you will not be at a loss to find employment; whenever you have any thing to say to me, however, remember I am quite at your command.”

“Oh, my dear Mrs. Oswald, I shall have a great deal to say to you, but as yet I scarcely know where to begin.”

“I know that, my love, so good bye. I hope Edward in that letter has made you fully acquainted with all his singularities.”

“Not quite; he still refers me to the books he recommended to me; and, though he avows that his intention in thus kindly—thus condescendingly, making me acquainted with all his secrets, as he calls them, is to describe to me the change that has taken place in his opinions, yet,

when he comes to describe what that change is, he does so in a few short sentences."

Mrs. Oswald smiled, "That is, indeed, rather provoking, my love, and I will not attempt to plead his excuse. You must make your complaints to himself." She then left Catharine, who returned to her letter.

"Yes, I must complain to himself," thought she, pleased with the idea; "but what shall I say to many parts of this letter? Aspasia, what can I say regarding her? Unfortunate Aspasia!" thought she, sighing; but, recollecting that she had been the means of rendering Dunallan guilty and unhappy, and then had forgotten him, she thought of her only with detestation; her idea was painful, and she attempted to banish it, but could not succeed. She, however, was quite aware, that, in his attachment to Aspasia, contrary as it was to the morality of religion, Dunallan had not been more guilty than many others who regarded their past lives without any apparent feeling of self-reproach. Her Father, and those friends with whom he most frequently associated, had spent their younger years together. Some of these they had spent abroad; and Catharine had often heard those years of gallantry and dissipation recalled as the happiest of their lives. It was true her presence had sometimes

been forgot when the charms of Madame de —— or Lady —— had been expatiated on with delighted recollection; and when her Father and his friends had reproached each other, or rather from their tones of voice, complimented each other.

“ Ah, Sir Hugh, you were a sad inconstant fellow !”

“ And you, my Lord Dunallan, have nothing to reproach yourself with on that head certainly, ha, ha !”

“ Do you remember that poor devil S——, Sir Hugh? Do you remember how he was managed by his pretty, intriguing, little wife,—your hundredth love, as you used to call her?”

“ And whose affections you, my Lord, stole from me. Ah, you mean to pay a compliment to the strength of my friendship when you recall that story !”

Catharine had always been disgusted by such conversations, and she loved Dunallan for the misery he had suffered while entangled in guilt. She ardently desired to comprehend those principles which he described as so powerful, and whose influence seemed so delightful—so purifying. She ardently wished that she also might feel their influence; for she had learnt to esteem Dunallan's understanding too highly to believe

that his reason could be subdued by an illusion of his imagination, which she had supposed the case with those enthusiasts, with whose notions she had been led to suppose Dunallan was tainted. She had read various parts of his letter over many times, and sat in deep thought over its contents. Dunallan's attachment to Aspasia was the part of his story which, however, left the deepest and most displeasing impression, and which still recurred when she attempted to fix her thoughts on other subjects. She could not disguise the truth to herself; Dunallan had been passionately attached to this woman, who seemed, by his description, to have been very charming. Catharine sighed when she recalled that description: "Such powers of conversation! Such grace! Such cultivation of mind!" "Ah!" thought she, "these are the charms which irresistibly attract the heart against its better resolutions! The innocence of a country education, and of country morals, must be approved of on cool reflection; but can reflection guide the heart? Can religion dispose of the affections as it pleases?" She shook her head incredulously at the idea; "or does Dunallan's religion, which seems to consider the human heart so evil, forbid us to fix our affections at all on what is so unworthy? No; for how ardently does Churchill

love his friend !” Catharine had wept over Churchill’s story. “Unhappy Dunallan!” thought she; “while I supposed him wandering every where in search of pleasure, regardless of the pain he inflicted on his Father, he has himself been endeavouring to fly from suffering—and from me,” she could not help adding. “But he must shrink from the idea of ever again being attached to any one; and after what he has known of real affection, how hateful to him must be the idea of a connexion for life with a creature he may neither be able to reason nor moralize himself into loving.”

Thus far only had Catharine arrived in arranging her ideas, when again obliged to join Mrs. Oswald.

“Well, my love,” said that Lady, “are you now more reconciled to Dunallan’s method of making you acquainted with his sentiments?”

“My dear Mrs. Oswald,” replied Catharine earnestly, “will you be frank with me, and reply to a few questions I wish extremely to have answered?”

“Certainly, my love.”

“Well, then, my dear Madam, tell me first, does your religion, and Mr. Dunallan’s, lead you to think every body bad, however amiable they may appear to be? Do you really believe that, if

we knew the hearts of every one, we should find them all bad? For this, I think, is Mr. Dunallan's opinion, and I confess it appears to me a very shocking opinion."

"The opinion, as you state it, my love, is certainly not Dunallan's, at least, not exactly so. Such an opinion supposes the whole world hypocrites, and those who appear most amiable only most hypocritical. This is not his opinion certainly; it is not even his opinion that we ought to form an unfavourable idea of any one, but upon the most positive proofs that they merit it."

"Yet, my dear Madam, both he and his friend Mr. Churchill consider the most perfect goodness to which we can attain as of no value—at least, so I understand him; but you yourself shall judge of what he says."

"I am perfectly acquainted with his sentiments on that subject, my dear Catharine; they are my own. It is my love, in the sight of an holy God that he believes and feels, that every human creature, however amiable he may appear in the eyes of his equally defective fellow-creatures, must appear worthless and guilty."

"Worthless! guilty! Do you not use very strong terms, my dear Madam?"

"No, my dear love, I use the words of the

Bible, which says that the human heart is ‘desperately wicked.’”

“Every human heart, Madam?”

“Yes, my love, no exception is made.”

“And can you really believe this, Mrs. Oswald, and still love your fellow-creatures?”

“My fellow-sinners, my Catharine. My belief of this ought, and sometimes does, to a painful degree, increase my love and sympathy for them.”

“But I suppose, Madam, the Bible means, that, compared to the perfections of the Divine Being, human nature is weak and insignificant.”

“No, my love; for though this is assuredly the case, reproaching us on this account would have been unjust. We only deserve censure when we put our powers to an unworthy use, not because those powers are weak and limited. It is a comparison between those rules given us by God in the Bible, to direct our conduct and affections, and the manner in which we ourselves choose to direct that conduct and those affections, which proves to us that we are naturally inclined to act differently from the will of God, and to feel love, and hate, and hope and fear, for those objects which are totally different from those which God commands us to love, and hate,

and fear, and desire; but I preach, and will tire you at this late hour."

"Oh, no, my dear Madam, I feel the deepest interest in conversation such as this. You seem to think that we naturally incline to disobey the commandments of God; now I think, if I only knew his will, it would delight me to obey it."

"And is there any difficulty, my love, in knowing that will on every occasion where we have to think or act?"

"But I am not conscious of ever having intentionally acted very contrary to that will."

Mrs. Oswald smiled.

"Why do you smile, my dear Madam?" asked Catharine blushing.

"Ah, my love, nothing could prove more forcibly to me, that you have never attempted to make that will the rule of your life. Recollect, my Catharine, the first requisition of that will, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind, and all thy strength.' But good night, my sweet love; may you be enabled to form just opinions on this most important, most interesting of all subjects."

Mrs. Oswald and Catharine then parted for the night; but Catharine did not go to sleep. After dismissing Martin, she again returned to

Dunallan's letter ; nor did she leave it till reminded of the hour by the dawning day.

Next morning she would gladly have dismissed Martin for another hour when she came to call her, but, recollecting Mrs. Oswald's smile the night before, she got up, and, though languid and unrested, was ready to appear at the hour of prayers.

This day brought another letter from Dunallan. It was short and hurried, written just before he sailed, but full of such deep and tender concern for her, that Catharine, unable to restrain her tears, retired to her own apartment, to indulge the mingled regret and pleasure it inspired. "Why did I not know him sooner?" thought she ; "why did I suffer prejudice to blind me to his character? How lively, how deep must his feelings be, who, in the midst of business of such importance, can find time to write thus kindly—thus sweetly, to a creature whom he can only pity. But perhaps ——" She read his short letter again. Every word might have been addressed to a sister. It concluded thus : "Adieu, my sweet, my lovely, and beloved friend." "Well, my dear, my excellent, my beloved Dunallan," thought Catharine, "whatever are your feelings for me, the aim of my life shall be to deserve your most valued esteem, and

when you return, you may perhaps yet be happy in your home."

With that resolution, Catharine immediately set about that exact scrutiny of her own character, and constant attention to its improvement, which she thought necessary to fit her for a companion to Dunallan. She eagerly began to form rules for spending every moment of her time to advantage, and she determined they should on no account be infringed.

She had, after many alterations and improvements, completed this plan, and commenced the occupation she had proposed for the coming hour; which was to read, with a determination to yield neither to fatigue nor dulness, one of the books recommended by Dunallan. She, however, found it neither dull nor tiresome, but, on the contrary, was reading with very deep interest, when a servant came to announce two visitors—Mrs. Ruthven and her daughter.

"How vexatious! How troublesome!" exclaimed Catharine, "Is Mrs. Oswald with the ladies?"

"No, Madam, Mrs. Oswald is gone out."

"I shall be with them immediately. How provoking!" continued she, "my whole plan destroyed at once. But I know at least how to pre-

vent very frequent visits," putting up her books and papers, and leaving them with regret.

Mrs. Ruthven's appearance soon disarmed Catharine of her displeasure. She was a very fine looking old lady, with a pale and interesting countenance.

"I fear I have interrupted some agreeable occupation, Mrs. Dunallan," said she, after the first compliments were over.

Catharine hesitated—"I was only reading, Madam,"

"But can any occupation be more interesting?"

Catharine smiled, and confessed that she had indeed been very deeply engaged. "I fear," added she, "my looks have betrayed my want of hospitality; the book I was reading ought to have inspired me with very different feelings."

It was the mild and pleasing expression of Mrs. Ruthven's countenance, joined to a maternal kindness, and sweetness of manners, that always reached the heart of the motherless Catharine, which so soon brought her to this frank avowal of her fault.

Mrs. Ruthven looked fixedly at her for a moment, with more than the common interest which beauty and amiable manners inspire; and then sighing deeply, turned her eyes to a por-

trait of the last Mrs. Dunallan, which hung on the opposite side of the room. Catharine followed her eyes; she looked for some moments, and then sighed very deeply.

“ You knew that lady I suppose, Madam,” said Catharine.

“ I did, and ——”

“ And you remember how different she was from the present lady,” interrupted Catharine, with a playfulness which, however, did not prevent her eyes from filling with tears.

“ I am not yet acquainted with the present lady,” replied Mrs. Ruthven, her eyes also filling, “ but unless the promise is very false, I must grieve that my departed friend has not lived to possess the one blessing she desired above all others—a daughter. But this is a foolish regret,” added she, smiling sadly. “ It is many years since I have been in this house,” continued Mrs. Ruthven, “ but the happiest hours of my life were spent in it. You will not be surprised, therefore, Mrs. Dunallan, at my wishing once more, before I die, to see it, and her who is in future to be its chief ornament and happiness. I know you will tire of an old woman, but ——”

“ Oh! do not think so poorly of me,” said Catharine. “ The first desire of my heart is

to resemble your friend, Mr. Dunallan's mother. There is no person I have desired so much to see, as one who could describe her to me."

This was a welcome theme to Mrs. Ruthven, and when Mrs. Oswald, an hour after, returned from her walk, she was surprised to meet, at the entrance of the house, Catharine, holding in hers, the hand of the infirm old lady, while she supported her with her arm thrown around her waist, and listening so eagerly to her as they walked, that she did not even observe Mrs. Oswald's approach.

After a cordial embrace on the part of Mrs. Ruthven and Mrs. Oswald, Catharine and her infirm companion proceeded in their interesting conversation, leaving Mrs. Oswald to entertain poor Miss Ruthven, whom Catharine had entirely overlooked.

"I wish once more," said Mrs. Ruthven, "to view that spot where my departed friend so often charmed me by her sweet and heavenly conversation. She always succeeded in warming my cold and worldly feelings by the ardour and purity of her piety. Though many years younger than I was, she had got far before me in her course. The world had become nothing to her, though still fitted to adorn it. She knew its

vanity, and longed to leave it; while she acted as if its duties were her delight.”

“But,” asked Catharine, “did she not wish to live on her son’s own account?”

“He had been taken from her,” replied Mrs. Ruthven. “She knew his father would leave no attempt untried to destroy the early lessons of piety she had attempted to impress on his young mind—this was her severest trial; but she had learnt in a wonderful degree to join the most unwearied exertions, where human exertions could avail, to the most perfect submission and confidence in the Divine will, where those exertions were fruitless. ‘Perhaps when I am gone,’ she used to say to me, ‘Mr. Dunallan may think more favourably of my principles; at least he will lose his dread of them, and endeavour no further to eradicate the impressions I have attempted to make on the mind of my child. I have committed him to God, who, I feel almost confident, will answer the prayers I have offered up, ever since his birth, for his best interests. God is my witness, who gave me the desire, that to see him truly religious, to see him even the most lowly gifted servant of my Lord, would delight me a thousand times more, than to see him, without religion, the most exalted of human beings. God has formed him all that the fond-

est or vainest mother could wish ; and when his own best time comes, he will impart to him that living principle which will direct all his powers to the honour and glory of the giver, and then he must be happy.' Her prayers have indeed been answered," continued Mrs. Ruthven ; " I trust, that those she so ardently offered up for you, my dear Mrs. Dunallan, may be equally so."

" For me !" repeated Catharine.

" Yes, for you. She knew the plans formed by her husband and Lord Dunallan to unite their families ; and foreseeing that those plans were likely to succeed, she felt, and prayed for you with the tenderness of a mother."

Catharine was much moved, and walked on in silence. At last, guided by Mrs. Ruthven, they stopt at the very spot where Dunallan had chosen to spend his last evening before he left Arnmore. Catharine had visited this spot daily since that time—it was indeed her favourite resort ; and when Mrs. Ruthven stopt, she inquired, with much emotion, " if that had been the favourite retreat of Mr. Dunallan's mother ?"

" It was her chosen retreat," replied Mrs. Ruthven, " where she enjoyed that solitude and communion with heaven which were too often interrupted within doors, by the strange caprices of her husband." Mrs. Ruthven looked mourn-

fully around. "How lovely! how flourishing!" exclaimed she, "while she who planned and arranged all these beauties is——"

"Is surrounded by what is far more glorious and beautiful than this," interrupted Catharine, pressing the hand she held in hers. "That reminds me of her," said Mrs. Ruthven, smiling sadly. "She who felt as a mother for you, my sweet young friend, hated every thing like gloom; and used to say to me, when overpowered by the lowness of my naturally weak spirits, that she would not suffer me to be melancholy when I knew the true source of joy and happiness: nor would she allow my imagination to follow those I loved to the horrors of the grave, when, as she said, I was invited to contemplate them amidst the spirits of those made perfect in happiness, as well as purity."

"Oh! that I did resemble her," exclaimed Catharine. "I must tell you, Mrs. Ruthven," continued she, "the reason why I received you so inhospitably this morning. I had been forming a plan of life for myself in this solitude, where I am determined to remain till Mr. Dunallan's return; and I had forgot that I should have any thing in the world to do but attend to this plan, which only included the attempt to improve my own mind and feelings by the strictest attention

to them ; and by the assistance of some books recommended to me by Mr. Dunallan : and my only other intended occupation was to attend to some institutions for the improvement of his people, which he trusted to me. Now, my dear Madam, as I commenced this plan of mine, by feeling extremely discomposed on hearing of an interruption, which I now find was to give me very great pleasure, I think my plan must be very defective ; and I should greatly wish, if the recollections are not too painful to you, to know how your friend, Mr. Dunallan's mother, found time to do all she did, for Mrs. Oswald quite discourages me by the accounts she has given me. Mrs. Oswald, however, was herself early separated by marriage, and always afterwards resided at a distance from Mrs. Dunallan, and only tells me what she heard from others."

" I shall be most happy, my dear young friend, to tell you all you wish to know on this subject," replied Mrs. Ruthven ; " and I feel grateful for the confidence you have placed in me respecting your very natural little disappointment this morning, when interrupted by my visit. I admire your design of forming a plan. I also very much approve of your intention to remain entirely at home during Mr. Dunallan's absence ; so much so, that I shall not even ask you to visit me,

much as I should prize such a visit; but you must make no exceptions, as you will give offence in a country where Mr. Dunallan's family has long been one of the first consequence; but before I go farther, I believe, my dear Mrs. Dunallan, it will be best to tell you frankly some things you ought to know. One is, that Mr. Dunallan's religious opinions are greatly ridiculed in this giddy and censorious county. And another is, that you are universally supposed to be shut up here with Mrs. Oswald by his desire, that you may in his absence be instructed by her in those dreadfully gloomy principles; and that you are very miserable. I should perhaps have shrunk from repeating this silly gossip, had I not heard from several of the people who have visited you here, that you looked very wretched, and seemed sad when they came away, but never proposed their staying; and that you told them, it was impossible you should return their visits; with such moving expressions of regret they were quite grieved for you."

"How absurd!" exclaimed Catharine, with indignation.

"I should certainly not have repeated all this, my dear," resumed Mrs. Ruthven, "had I not perceived by your looks of perfect health and peace of mind, and from the glow which followed

the mention of your Mr. Dunallan's name, that it was absurd."

Catharine blushed and turned away. It was painful to her to know that she so evidently betrayed feelings which she had not avowed even to herself did exist.

"Forgive me if I pain you, my dear Mrs. Dunallan," continued Mrs. Ruthven; "but during this dear friend's absence, I think I am not mistaken in believing you would be willing, even at the expense of being teased with an old woman's cautions and advice, to preserve his character as far as possible from those aspersions which the profession of uncommon strictness of principle always provokes, until time, and a blameless consistency of conduct prove the sincerity of the profession."

"Most assuredly," replied Catharine, "this would be my first wish. Tell me only, my dearest Madam, what I ought to do. Oh! if you knew how much happiness I already have lost by listening to such aspersions! but that is past. What must I do, dear Mrs. Ruthven, to preserve to Mr. Dunallan during his absence, that respect, that veneration I know he so justly merits?"

"Show, my dear young friend, that you yourself feel it," replied Mrs. Ruthven, "and that you are happy: and above all, that Mr. Dunallan's

strictness of religious principle is respected by you; and as far as you have really adopted his opinions, openly avow that you have. I believe, too," added Mrs. Ruthven, "that you must admit a little more hospitality into your plan, rather than have Mr. Dunallan considered a tyrant, who has forbidden you either to leave home or receive visitors."

"Oh, yes," replied Catharine, "I shall now receive all who choose to visit me, and make myself as agreeable as I possibly can; but then adieu to all my plans of improvement."

"Why so, my dear?"

"Because I could see very plainly that those people who have already visited me, only required the slightest invitation to prolong their stay; and I must either give this invitation in future, or confirm the belief that I am imprisoned here by Mr. Dunallan."

"Well, my dear, but it is possible to do both."

"True," replied Catharine, "I had almost forgot that you were to tell me how Mr. Dunallan's mother contrived to do all she wished to do, with so little time at her own disposal."

"Well," replied Mrs. Ruthven, smiling, "I shall begin by asking—are you an early riser?"

"Sometimes," replied Catharine, "when I have any thing sufficiently interesting to induce

me. At present I am called at eight, because I devote half an hour to reading books, chosen for me by Mr. Dunallan, before I do any thing else; and I meet Mrs. Oswald to read to the servants at nine."

"Well," replied Mrs. Ruthven, "Mr. Dunallan's mother only rose about an hour earlier."

"An hour earlier!"

"Yes, when in health; and to this hour, or two hours which were her own in the morning, she has often told me she owed all the happiness she possessed."

"How so? dear Madam."

"I shall tell you, my dear, how she spent these hours—she passed them chiefly on her knees—examining her heart in the presence of her God—its every motive—its every desire; and comparing these motives and desires with the will of God, declared in the Scriptures, which lay before her always as she knelt, she learnt that will so perfectly, and the indissoluble union between obedience to its dictates, and the peace and happiness of the mind, that she used to say those morning hours were as necessary and indispensable to her soul's health, as food was to that of her body. Some young people," continued Mrs. Ruthven, "who sincerely desire to serve their Creator, give themselves much labour, which

brings no return of good, by attempting to do many things, while they remain ignorant of their own hearts, and comparatively so also of the Scriptures, which alone can guide them aright in the way of salvation. They read other books on the subject, they puzzle themselves with difficulties, and they forget that their Lord has said, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' Mrs. Dunallan, on the contrary, read few books on religious subjects but the Bible; and simply believing its declaration, that we are incapable of ourselves even to think a good thought; and, on the other hand, believing as simply, the promise of a new nature to those who ask it aright, she applied in humble confidence to her Saviour for that new nature; and while thus employing the means appointed by himself—reading with an ardent desire to comprehend and obey—praying for the power—examining her heart and soul in his presence, with the single wish that they might be wholly and unreservedly devoted to him, she felt that promised peace which passeth understanding, and cannot be described. She returned to the world tranquil and serene—she had reposed her cares on that arm which supported the universe—she had fixed her supreme love on the same glorious being—she had implored his aid, to preserve her in that line of duty, which

was pleasing to himself; and, in her continually difficult and trying circumstances, no voice for many many years before her death was ever heard to speak of her but in terms of praise and admiration. It seemed indeed as if the promise of the prophet had been fulfilled to her, ‘Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.’ She was the life of every society, though she generally contrived to give a more grave and rational turn to the conversation, than many of her husband’s friends would have relished in another; but her character was so well known, and at the same time, her anxiety for the real interest and happiness of every fellow-creature, was so evident, and so sincerely earnest, that those who did not abandon their vices and irregular habits, yet candidly avowed to her their belief that goodness alone could produce happiness, and seemed to feel an unaccountable pleasure in describing to her the dark and melancholy thoughts which sometimes imbittered their calmer hours. In short, my dear young friend, this most amiable of human beings was so, because she received the power from on high—a power which she had learnt so greatly to value, and to connect in her thoughts

so intimately with happiness, that in seeking the one, she felt she was also seeking the other; and therefore she began each day by devoting its first hours to this pursuit. The events of the day she considered as guided, or overruled by the providence of her God and Saviour; and she received whatever was presented to her, of happiness or disappointment, as from a father who knew her nature, and what it required to improve it, better than she herself did." Mrs. Ruthven paused, and looked round at Catharine, who had leant back while she spoke—she was in tears.

"Why this, my dear young friend?"

"I cannot tell," replied Catharine, smiling, and wiping them away, "I really cannot tell; but I wish I knew the *happiness* of religion: as yet I only know it as a restraint, or at most, I feel admiration for the character of the Divine Being through the beauties of his creation."

"Follow on to know the Lord, and you shall know him, my sweet young friend," replied Mrs. Ruthven, with great tenderness; "and believe me, who am a weak-spirited sinful traveller to that better country, that the knowledge of Him, even to the weakest and most unwilling to trust in his goodness, is a source of peace and happiness which, though it may not save them, through

their own weakness and culpable want of faith in his promises, from many sins and sorrows, yet is so superior to all the world can give, that when once attained, we scarcely need any other proof of its being the gift of heaven."

"Thank you, my dear Madam," replied Catharine, "I believe all you say, and hope I shall one day understand it. In the mean time, I shall attempt to imitate Mr. Dunallan's angel mother, at least in studying the will of God on my bended knees, the first moments of every day. But here comes Mrs. Oswald. We must, my dear Madam, resume this conversation again."

"Certainly, my sweet Mrs. Dunallan, it can scarcely be so delightful to you as it is to me."

Mrs. Ruthven remained two days longer at Arnmore, and Catharine learnt much of *her* character, whose steps she now so ardently wished to follow. On going away, Mrs. Ruthven offered to leave her daughter with Catharine, to enliven, in some degree, a solitude, which appeared to her too severe for one so young, and so evidently formed to love and be beloved in society. Catharine felt her kindness, and though Miss Ruthven had excited little interest in her feelings, she accepted the offer with gratitude. But though she attempted to make the time pass agreeably

to her guest, she could with difficulty at times command her wandering thoughts, while conversing with the amiable, gentle, but commonplace, Miss Ruthven.

CHAPTER II.

THE morning after Mrs. Ruthven's departure, Catharine was called an hour earlier than heretofore, and began that examination of her own heart, which she had determined should be the first occupation of each day; but she scarcely knew where, or how to begin. She knelt down with the Bible open before her, and became overpowered with a kind of awe quite new to her. "How very serious is this occupation!" thought she, when she recollected Mrs. Ruthven's description of the manner in which Dunallan's mother had performed it. She had examined every motive and desire of her heart, as if in the presence of her Creator. Catharine attempted to do the same. She read, and prayed that she might understand. She reflected on her past life, and compared it with what she knew of the precepts of Christianity, and she saw, that in that pure light it appeared only a succession of trifling pursuits, and a continued indulgence in all that her heart desired, without any reference to the Being who demanded the first place in that heart. She rose from her knees humbled and dejected;

and, for some days, though she persevered in her morning task, yet she felt no increase of happiness; on the contrary, she was at times really miserable. Gradually, however, as she became more acquainted with scripture, she perceived that peace of mind did not consist in ignorance of the strictness it required, as she had been tempted to think, when, on comparing her heart and life with its demands, she found, that the more she knew them, the more was she convinced that she never could perform them. She had said to herself repeatedly, "No human creature can; the sincere attempt must be all that is required:" but she could not rest satisfied with this conclusion, because she could find no satisfactory answer to the question which necessarily followed, "Why were rules so impracticable given to direct us?" But as she read on, in simple earnestness of mind, the Christian system opened more fully to her understanding. She read Dunallan's short sketch of its outlines with the deepest attention: she conversed freely with Mrs. Oswald, who greatly assisted her in this search after truth. Catharine's was not a mind that could acquiesce submissively in remaining ignorant on any subject that had once excited her curiosity, and on one of such vast importance as that which now occupied her thoughts, she sought informa-

tion with unwearied ardour, and she gradually, but clearly and convincingly, discovered the meaning of those parts of scripture which had at first led her to despair of ever truly becoming a Christian.

“ Ah ! my dear Mrs. Oswald,” said she, one evening after a deeply interesting conversation with that lady, “ how well I now comprehend that passage which you have so often attempted to make me attend to in vain, while I was in despair at my own weakness, and the strictness of the precepts of scripture. I now see that these pure precepts, that strict law, is intended as a ‘ schoolmaster to bring us to Christ,’ without whom we cannot perform one of its dictates in a right spirit. You at last said, my dear Mrs. Oswald, my true, best friend, that experience alone, my own experience, must teach me this ; and you said most truly indeed. I see all with a clearness that surprises myself. I see that we require an atonement for our past lives, and for the evil that still pollutes the hearts and actions of the most perfect. I feel that we require a new heart before we can see this, or be disposed to ask power to obey the will of God.”

“ Yes, my dear love,” replied Mrs. Oswald, “ my prayers for you, Edward’s prayers for you, have been answered. How will he rejoice to

know, that you have thus earnestly, thus perseveringly, sought that which it was the first desire of his heart you should obtain."

Catharine sighed deeply, "He would scarcely believe the reality, my dear madam, if he saw how little influence it has upon me."

Mrs. Oswald smiled, "He would be satisfied, my love, if he saw you, as I see you, struggling against your natural temper and acquired habits."

Catharine had, indeed, for some time been struggling constantly against the most powerful and confirmed of all her habits, which was a total indifference to all around her, excepting, perhaps, the individual or two who might, among numbers, excite some interest in her feelings. She had been so long accustomed to be courted and amused by all, that she absolutely forgot the presence of those who did not in some manner excite her attention by their superior powers of pleasing. A slight hint of this from Mrs. Oswald had pointed it out to her attention, and made it one of the subjects of her morning scrutiny. Ever since her conversation with Mrs. Ruthven, Catharine had obliged herself to invite those who visited her either to remain or return; and very soon her house became the favourite resort of the younger females of the county. Catharine was the idol of the day; but this afforded her no gra-

tification, because she valued very little the admiration or affection of those with whom she associated, from a sense of duty. Mrs. Oswald's hint, however, led her to examine into the cause of this want of interest in her young fellow-creatures; and this examination led her to discover many hitherto unsuspected faults in her heart and temper. She watched these with increasing care, and her improvement was proportionably rapid, and, consequently, her internal tranquillity increased in an equal degree. Instead of that lassitude and want of interest which hitherto had, at times, accompanied all her pursuits and all her pleasures, she now felt a degree of interest and enjoyment quite new to her. She lived to her Creator, and she felt that peace, and sweet gaiety of heart, which can exist only where all the feelings and passions of the soul are subjected to the influence of religion. One severe disappointment during this period, had taught her that religion is not a guide only, but also a source of the sweetest consolation. Elizabeth had found it impossible to come to Arnmore. Her husband's professional duties had called him to London, and for various reasons it was proper she should accompany him. Catharine felt this disappointment severely, but one still more trying now awaited her. The time arrived at which Dunallan had

led her to expect she would hear from him, and no letter came. Catharine became more anxious every day, every hour, though Mrs. Oswald discovered many plausible reasons for the delay. At last Catharine received a letter from Walderford, informing her that he had heard from Dunallan, and thought it possible his letters might have reached him before Catharine received hers. Dunallan was well, and succeeding even beyond his hopes in the object of his mission; at least all promised fair; and he hoped he should be able to return home much sooner than he had expected. Walderford had transcribed the passage—Dunallan called it “his delightful home.”

Catharine returned thanks to heaven, with the most heartfelt gratitude, for this relief from anxiety; for she had been unable to restrain her imagination from picturing every thing dreadful that could have befallen Dunallan.

Still, however, day passed away after day, and week after week, and no letter from Dunallan either to Catharine or Mrs. Oswald. Another letter from Mr. Walderford announced his having again heard from Dunallan—still well and successful, but extremely occupied, even harassed with business. “But,” added Mr. Walderford in his letter, “Dunallan, I have reason to hope, may now return to England in a few months.”

Catharine still felt grateful to heaven for the preservation of his health ; but the certainty that Dunallan had, at least, become indifferent to her, required all her fortitude to support.

Still another letter to Mr. Walderford, and none to Catharine or Mrs. Oswald.

Mrs. Oswald had herself at last ceased to account for his silence, and looked grave and anxious. She had written constantly to Dunallan, and had described her own and Catharine's disappointment at never hearing from him ; and his neglecting to reply to her letters at first surprised, and then alarmed her.

At last the long looked-for letters did arrive. Catharine retired with hers to her own apartment. She dared not trust herself to read it in the presence of the young party now assembled at Arnmore. She trembled so violently she could scarcely break the seal. She at last, however, unfolded this long, long expected letter. One page, and the half of another was written. She dared scarcely read.

“ I have just received your letter, my dear Catharine, and answer it immediately.” “ My letter !” exclaimed Catharine, “ My twenty letters !” for she had not ceased writing to him, though, of late, colder in her expressions of esteem and gratitude. She read on—

“ You say you continue to find pleasure in the occupations I recommended to you. Mrs. Oswald also assures me that you seem happy. I endeavour, therefore, to banish my uneasiness on your account. You know there is nothing which I should not feel it my duty and happiness to attempt, which could in the least degree add to your comfort, or even amusement; unfortunate and most guilty as I feel myself to be, in having deprived you of the power of choice in the most important of all your earthly concerns. I would not so often repeat this, did I not wish to impress on your mind how greatly I feel this consideration adds to your every other claim on me. I feel your generosity in assuring me that you are not unhappy, and your goodness in desiring to please your absent friend in all you do. Be assured I am not ungrateful; yet I wish you more to follow your own inclinations. Whatever you do will most please me, if I think it has interested or amused you.

“ My friend has not deceived you in saying, I may be home sooner than I expected when I left you; but, dear Catharine, excepting, if possible, to discover your wishes more perfectly, my coming home, be assured, will make no difference. I ask only to be regarded as your friend,

as the person on earth most bound to watch over your happiness, and who must ever be

Your sincere, your devoted

EDWARD DUNALLAN."

Catharine read, and reread this letter. She compared it with his last;—how changed! Yet it was not unkind; it was, as he ever was, feeling and anxious for her happiness, even to a degree that lessened his own; but his manner of writing to her was too, too plainly changed. What could he mean, particularly the last part of his letter? "I have expressed myself too kindly to him," thought she, blushing as she thought, "and this is the way he has chosen to show me that he thinks so. A few weeks absence has proved to him, that the interest produced by pity for my unhappy situation cannot last, and he fears my foolish affections will be fixed on him in a way he cannot return.

Catharine threw herself on her knees, and wept bitterly. She prayed for submission to the Divine will—to all its dispensations, however painful, however mortifying. "I require to be mortified—I know it," continued she; "enable me to love the hand that chastens to improve. I would fix my affections on earth—raise them to

thyself, and teach me to believe in the love I cannot see in this bitter draught."

Catharine remained more than an hour alone, and then returned to Mrs. Oswald and her guests, perfectly composed, though pale and dejected.

Mrs. Oswald said nothing of the contents of her letter, and Catharine made no inquiries; she perceived, however, that Mrs. Oswald was remarkably grave, and treated her with more than her usual tenderness. Catharine dreaded that she had something painful to learn regarding Dunallan, and earnestly examined Mrs. Oswald's countenance, to discover what she had to fear. Mrs. Oswald seemed to read her thoughts, and held out the letter she had received, saying, "I have no secrets, my love." Catharine took the letter reluctantly, but Mrs. Oswald pressed it upon her; and inviting some young ladies who were present to go with her and examine some newly arrived plants, Catharine remained alone.

Dunallan's letter to his aunt was kindly, but not cheerfully written. He did not mention Catharine till near the close of the letter. He expressed pleasure at hearing she was not unhappy: "She is young to every thing," continued he; "Novelty has still many charms for her; and if the disposition you, my dear Madam, describe increases, I hope it may be possible to preserve

her at least from unhappiness during those years in which hope and imagination are so vivid, that the quiet and rational enjoyments which I alone can offer her, appear irksome and insipid; after that period, there may, perhaps, be some real happiness in store for both of us;—but no more of this. Happiness, my dear aunt, I need not remind *you*, is not to be often found on this side the grave. If I could feel innocent in the part I have acted towards her!—but that is past now beyond recall.” This was all that was said of Catharine; but there was a degree of impatience to be home, expressed in this letter, which surprised her. “Why should he wish to be home? What happiness can home offer to him?” thought she. “But I always regard myself as all that he possesses at home. How absurd! What, to such a man as Dunallan, is one private connexion! If his feeling heart could be satisfied that I was happy, he would soon forget my existence. I only am a load to him—a cause of pain and anxiety. This shall not be. I will write so as to convince him, that I at least know, that the source of the purest happiness is not in this world—not even in possessing the affections of the most perfect beings it contains; and I trust, that in seeking happiness from its only true source, the liveliness of hope and imagination will be so directed, as to

convince him that it increases that happiness a thousand fold."

Catharine returned her letter to Mrs. Oswald without making any remark, who received it also in silence.

At night, when the rest of the party had retired to their apartments, Catharine followed Mrs. Oswald, "Will you admit me for a few moments, my dearest madam?"

Mrs. Oswald drew her affectionately into her bosom, "My beloved Catharine, I know what you must have suffered during this day of disappointment. But, my love, I am completely persuaded that there is some mystery hangs over this long silence of Dunallan's, and this strange alteration in the style of his letters—some mistake, that only requires explanation."

Catharine kissed Mrs. Oswald tenderly, and then drew away from her. For a few moments she could not speak. Mrs. Oswald herself wept.

"My dear, kind Mrs. Oswald," said Catharine at last, "this has indeed been a day of bitter disappointment to me; but I think you will believe that I neither deceive myself nor you when I assure you, that it is not so insupportably severe as I dreaded it would be when I first read that long-looked-for letter. The idea, that every event of my life is ordered exactly as it happens

by a tender and merciful Father, is almost as powerfully present to my thoughts and feelings as the painful contents of these letters; and the idea is so sweetly soothing—so elevating, that I cannot say I am very unhappy; indeed, what I feel, though it is unlike common pleasure, is superior to it. But, my dear Madam, I do not believe there is any mystery where you suppose there is; and I am now come to ask you to make me a promise without which I cannot feel satisfied.”

“ If the promise is, not to attempt to unravel this mystery, my dearest Catharine, do not ask me, for I cannot give it.”

“ Then, my dear Madam, I must submit, and indeed be most wretched.”

“ How, my love?”

“ Because, my dear Mrs. Oswald, I cannot help feeling certain, that this idea about mystery is quite groundless. You will lead Mr. Dunallan to suppose that I expect more of his regard than he can bestow; this will make him consider himself unjust, and then he will be unhappy; and this is the only thing I now really dread, and which would, I am sure, make me miserable.”

“ Ah, my Catharine,” replied Mrs. Oswald,

“ would you, from such false refinements, such trifling delicacies, suffer some injurious mistake, some deception to proceed, which may in the end prove fatal to the happiness of both?”

“ But, my dear Madam, how is it possible there can be any mistake? Mr. Dunallan must have received our letters—it is plain he has from some passages in his. The only mistake is this, that I have supposed he felt more tenderness for me than he does, or can. You, my dearest, kindest Mrs. Oswald, have assisted me in this delusion, and Mr. Dunallan wishes to undeceive us.”

Mrs. Oswald shook her head, “ What romantic delicacy, my love; it is unworthy of you.”

“ But, Madam,” replied Catharine, rather hurt, “ it is I who must suffer either way; may I not at least have my choice?”

“ Certainly, my love; forgive me, if, in my anxiety for your happiness, I seem to forget your right to dictate in what so nearly concerns yourself.”

“ Forgive me, my too kind Mrs. Oswald, I may be, I probably am, wrong; but will you at least wait till I have had time to think over this matter?”

“ In the way that Dunallan’s mother used to

examine every subject?" asked Mrs. Oswald, smiling kindly.

"Yes," replied Catharine.

"Surely, my love; your decision, after such an examination, will entirely satisfy me."

Catharine never found such difficulty in deciding any question. There was surely no *good reason* against Mrs. Oswald's making the simple inquiry she wished; yet, when obliged next morning to join that lady, and her other guests, Catharine had been unable to form any opinion which satisfied her on the subject. After breakfast, Catharine, who had never suffered visitors, or any other cause, to prevent her from attending to those institutions intrusted to her by Dunallan, prepared to go and visit her school. Mrs. Oswald offered to accompany her; and, on their way, inquired whether she had formed her opinion on the subject of their conversation the preceding night.

Catharine hesitated. "Is it necessary that one should be able to give a convincing reason for every difference of opinion, Madam?" said she at last; "for I confess that, after I have thought over, and studied this subject almost ever since we parted last night, I have been unable to find one reason which you will admit, for

differing from you; yet I still do so as much as ever. May feeling, or delicacy, or instinct, or any thing you choose to call it, not decide on some subjects?"

Mrs. Oswald smiled. "I see that you have come to the same conclusion I have, my dear Catharine. I have found it vain to try the merits of this subject by any rules but those of feeling; and I remember when I should have felt exactly as you do; and, therefore, for the present at least, I must just do as you wish."

"My dear Mrs. Oswald, a thousand thanks! This is too good! Oh, how I thank you!"

"But you will write Dunallan, my love?"

"Yes, I ought—I must; but I know not how
_____"

"Write naturally, my Catharine, write just as you feel; I also shall write by this evening's post: our letters must go together, since I am to say nothing about you. Your letter may cost you some thought; I shall attend your school for you if you choose to return and write it now; your guests will expect you to join them soon."

Catharine gratefully accepted of Mrs. Oswald's offer. She felt that her letter would indeed cost her much thought. She dreaded betraying the slightest feeling of disappointment; and she

equally dreaded any expression escaping her that friendship alone might not dictate. After many changes, and still unsatisfied with what she had written, she was obliged to conclude and join her guests.

CHAPTER III.

CALMER feelings gradually took the place, in Catharine's mind, of those painful emotions which Dunallan's letter had occasioned, but with intervals of extreme sadness. She attempted to banish the idea of Dunallan altogether; but she was not at all times either so completely on her guard against the recollections that stole into her mind, as to be prepared to struggle against their admission, or so wise as to turn from those dreams of happiness, the indulgence of which always added pain to the reality. The season, too, added to her sadness. It was now towards the end of autumn; the cold evenings, and sometimes sweeping blasts, which rapidly thinned the woods of their foliage, seemed to announce the near approach of winter; while the bright sunshine, and freshness of the air, made walking still delightful in the early part of the day. Catharine, from her childhood, had been deeply alive to the influence of nature; her spirits had always been subject to its power in an uncommon degree; and now she yielded without resistance

to its impression. Most of the time which was not spent in those occupations she considered as sacred duties, or in company, was spent in wandering alone through the beautiful scenery of Arnmore. She did not feel that religion forbade the soft melancholy inspired by a view of nature in its decay; on the contrary, she found that, between nature and religion, there was an analogy so strong and so perfect, that the one was the most exquisitely pleasing and beautiful illustration of the other; and she sought, as her greatest pleasure, those scenes which, suiting the deepest feelings of her soul, so elevated those feelings as to make all enjoyments unconnected with religion appear to be of no value whatever. Her mind became stronger from exertion; and though, when she sometimes turned her thoughts to the future, her heart sickened at the disappointment of all her hopes, she, at other times could look forward with composure, regarding life in its real light, as a preparation for another state of existence—a mere journey, in which it was of little consequence what happened to us, provided we did not deviate from the path which led to a happy immortality.

Another letter from Dunallan destroyed for a time her tranquillity and strength of mind. This letter was even more cold and formal than the

last; it was almost cruelly so, Catharine thought; and a feeling of resentment made her at first determine not to reply to it. She, however, overcame this feeling, and answered it immediately.

Another letter soon followed; not so very cold as the former, but shorter, and, if possible, less expressive of interest.

Catharine now began to dread Dunallan's return more than any thing that was likely to happen to her. She felt a painful apprehension, indeed almost a certainty, that a change so complete, from, at least, tender interest, to total indifference, or even dislike, must have some deeper cause than the dread of her becoming too fondly attached to him. The idea of Aspasia sometimes haunted her, as a vision of every thing dreadful; but she would not suffer a thought to dwell on such a subject; it seemed ungenerous, unjust, injurious to Dunallan—it was misery to herself. She saw, however, that Mrs. Oswald in vain attempted to assume her usual cheerfulness. She often forgot that Catharine was present, and, stopping her work, would sit for many minutes in deep and apparently painful thought; then, recollecting herself, would begin to talk in a tone of gaiety too evidently forced to deceive. This thoughtfulness rather increased after receiving a letter from Dunallan, for which she had express-

ed considerable impatience, but which seemed to have entirely disappointed her.

Catharine now dreaded that Dunallan had met with some amiable being like himself, who had taught him to feel more keenly the misery of that hateful tie which bound him to herself for ever. Yet she thought that his principles, imperfectly as she knew them, ought to have secured him from this danger, or at least from the indulgence of it. But all regarding him was now involved in an uncertainty so painful, that Catharine wished to banish him completely from her thoughts, and to leave her fate entirely at the disposal of that Being who alone had any control over the future. This was a difficult task; but other feelings for Dunallan began to gain ground. Her admiration and tenderness for him had been greatly heightened from having found his character so totally different from what her imagination had represented him, and from feeling that she had joined in the unjust and injurious opinion which those around her had formed of him. His manner and conduct to herself had also won her affections sufficiently to make his excellence of character a delightful subject of contemplation; but now that a cloud hung over him, her first feelings, in regard to him, in some degree, resum-

ed their influence. She believed him good, but she thought him at least singular.

“ I see, my dear Catharine,” said Mrs. Oswald to her one day, “ that your opinion of Dunallan begins to change. I entreat you to struggle against this. I feel quite certain that time will prove, that he does not merit less of your esteem than when you parted.”

“ I do struggle, my dear Madam, to form a just opinion of Mr. Dunallan,” replied Catharine; “ but, in reality, I know very little of him. I met him at first, you know, with a thousand prejudices against him; and though we passed six weeks in the same house, these prejudices continued so powerful, that, though I saw him act, and heard him speak continually in such a way as, on recollection, I feel ought to have overcome those prejudices, he still continued, in my opinion, the same character in a great degree, which my imagination had pictured him. When I accompanied him here, and found him so considerate—so delicate—so generous to myself, and saw him so beloved by you and all around him, I immediately went to the opposite extreme; and from the few most engaging, most happy days I then passed in his society, my imagination was forming a character far too perfect to be real.”

“ Possibly it might, my dear ; but all I ask is, that, in attempting to form this just opinion, you will leave his present—to me unaccountable, conduct out of the question.”

“ I shall try to do so. If you knew, however, my dear Mrs. Oswald, how useful his present coldness has been to me, I believe you would not, on my account at least, regret it.”

“ You have supported it as I should have desired, my Catharine ; far better, I confess, than I should have expected.”

“ Ah ! Madam, you have not seen my heart ; but I know it myself better now. I thought all was right ; I thought I had discovered the cause why every pursuit had ended in disappointment, until I attempted those pointed out to me by Mr. Dunallan. I supposed they continued to increase in interest because they aimed at the everlasting improvement of my fellow-creatures ; but when first I became convinced that Mr. Dunallan had lost all interest in me and my pursuits, they became irksome to me. I discovered that I had been acting from no higher motives than the hope of his approbation. Now I know better, and have learnt how to feel pleasure in fulfilling Mr. Dunallan’s wishes, without expecting the reward of his approbation, though I still value that also.”

“ I rejoice, my Catharine, replied Mrs. Oswald, “ that you have gathered this lesson from any source. It is a sad deception to think we are doing all to please God, when, in reality, we are idolizing a fellow-creature. Your future life, my love, will be the more happy for this.”

Catharine was not unhappy now; she had learnt to think less of Dunallan. The idea of him, when it did return to her, was always painful, and, even when absent, depressed her spirits; for, if her natural gaiety of heart attempted to return, something painful checked it, and then she recollected Dunallan.

Winter had now closed in, and Catharine was obliged to seek her pleasures and employments chiefly within doors. The weather was wet, cold, and dreary.

Amongst all those who had visited Catharine during the summer and autumn, there were but few persons who had really gained any share of her affections. Amongst these was a young girl, named Helen Graham.

Helen Graham was one of the six daughters of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, whose fortune was too limited to allow much to be bestowed on their education; yet whose pride of family led him to dread as the greatest disgrace, any matrimonial connexion for his daughters

with families in the least degree inferior to his own in antiquity and other similar virtues.

Helen Graham was an uncultivated romantic girl, with the most ardent affections. She had read novels and poetry in abundance, and often had attempted to express her own glowing feelings in rhyme, but would have suffered the torture sooner than that any eye should have seen those indeed very imperfect productions. On first becoming acquainted with Catharine, she had felt overawed by her superiority, and regarded her as a model of the most perfect excellence. Her ease and grace of manners—her beauty—her variety of conversation—her information—her acquirements, all were far superior to those of the most admired of her former companions. Catharine, on her part, had remarked the extreme, even painful bashfulness of Helen's manner, when compelled to come into notice, contrasted with the intelligence of her looks, and the expressive energy of her language and manners, when she mixed, unconscious of being observed, in general conversation. There was something in this mixture of bashfulness and apparent talent which excited Catharine's interest; she attempted to win Helen to be at her ease with her, and in doing this, treated her with a degree of kindness which Helen soon returned

with the most unbounded and devoted affection. Catharine could not be insensible to this real and ardent regard; on the contrary, she returned it with a warmth that surprised herself; for she had supposed that Dunallan's disappointing conduct towards her, had given her affections a chill that they would not recover on this side the grave; but she found, that in the devoted affection of this ardent girl, the fondness of the children, to whom she every day became more tenderly attached, and the maternal interest, and kindness of Mrs. Oswald, her heart was satisfied.

“ I could be content to live during the whole of my pilgrimage on earth in this little society,” said she one evening to Mrs. Oswald and Helen, after a long winter day, in which snow had been falling without ceasing: “ but I must insist on your leaving us, Helen, very soon, to go to Edinburgh, as your father wishes.”

Helen smiled, “ I cannot go now,” replied she, “ my aunt has set off without me.”

“ How! why did she not come for you as I supposed she would?”

“ Oh, never mind,” replied Helen, gaily, “ she knew I did not wish to go. I shall now be permitted to remain with you all the winter, if you will allow me to stay,”

“ No, indeed, my dear kind Helen.”

“ Then I must go home, for my aunt has taken Jane instead of me, and she can have but one of us. Jane wished to go; and there is not a spot in the universe which will ever be so dear to me as this. What is there in Edinburgh that could interest me, while I thought I might in the very least degree add to your happiness, Catharine?”

“ My dearest Helen, you distress me.”

“ Do you think, Catharine, I should have been married had I gone to Edinburgh?” asked Helen, playfully, “ for that is what my father and aunt expect.”

“ Perhaps, my dear Helen, you might have attained to that envied state,” replied Catharine, smiling, and then sighing deeply.

Helen was shocked at her own forgetfulness, though she only dreaded having reminded Catharine of Dunallan’s absence, which she supposed was the case of her occasional fits of sadness.

Catharine kissed her cheek affectionately.

“ I believe, my dear Helen, I must be so selfish as to allow you to be happy in your own way, till I can myself take you in search of this husband.”

The time again approached in which Catharine expected to hear from Dunallan; and though his letters now only gave her pain, yet she anxi-

ously looked for their arrival; and as the snow continued to fall, and deepen more and more, she began to dread that the roads might be shut up so as to prevent these letters reaching Mrs. Oswald or herself. She at times dreaded Dunallan's coming unexpectedly himself. At last letters did arrive; Catharine's hands trembled as she broke the seal: after reading a few lines—

“He is in England!” exclaimed she, becoming very pale, then feeling unable to restrain her emotion, she hurried out of the room. When alone, she threw herself on her knees, and spreading Dunallan's letter before her, “Whatever are its contents, I shall receive them thus,” thought she, again beginning to read the still loved characters—

“My dear Catharine, Allow me to return you my grateful thanks for your last letter. Be assured I am most sensible of your goodness, your generosity, in so unweariedly persevering in your attempts to satisfy my wishes regarding those affairs, with which you say I intrusted you. I shall soon, I hope, be able in person to express my gratitude for all the trouble you have taken to please me; and perhaps to convince you that I am not quite the *exacting* being your letters too plainly tell me you suppose me to be. I arrived in England two days ago, and in London yester-

day. I shall not be detained here above a day or two, and then propose setting off immediately for Arnmoo. May I hope you will receive me still as a friend. I claim nothing in this character but the right of watching over your happiness. I ask nothing more, than that you should believe that I am, ever your sincerely attached friend,

E. DUNALLAN."

"And it is I who deserve blame, then!" thought Catharine, when she had finished Dunallan's letter. "I have disgusted by my very desire to fulfil his wishes. Surely, surely, Dunallan, this is a little unfair; but I care not. If you feel more satisfied in believing it is so, I shall not vindicate myself, but submit. Oh! that I could fix all my affections where there is no injustice, no disappointment."

This letter, however, was kind compared to Dunallan's last; and Catharine felt, while she wept over it, that, mixed as they were with unjust complaints, his expressions of interest, and the expectation of so soon again meeting him, too powerfully revived those feelings of tenderness which she had of late supposed almost entirely overcome. Those feelings she now greatly dreaded; and, earnestly praying for power to resist them, she determined to return to Mrs. Os-

wald, that she might escape from the many softening recollections which crowded on her memory.

Mrs. Oswald was alone when Catharine entered the room; her countenance expressed the utmost satisfaction.

“Now, my dear love,” exclaimed she, embracing Catharine tenderly, “I shall again see you happy. All will now be explained.”

“But, my dear Mrs. Oswald, I hope you still consider your promise to me sacred? You will ask no explanation?”

“No, no, my love, I shall not find that necessary. Dunallan has no concealments; he will himself wish to explain every thing.”

Mrs. Oswald seemed to enjoy a new existence.

“Do you think, my dear Madam,” said Catharine, after looking earnestly towards a window for some moments, “Don’t you think the snow has fallen so deep, that perhaps the cross road between Arnmore and the great road may be shut up? Should it not be cleared away? Mr. Dunallan may be stopped.”

“Surely, my love, if it is necessary.”

“I think, my dear Mrs. Oswald, as he has left every thing to my care, I ought not to suffer so chilling an impediment to meet him on his return home. His feelings require no addition to their

coldness, I fear, at least for some of the inmates of his Arnmore. Shall I order the snow to be cleared away, my dear Madam?"

"Surely, my Catharine, and also endeavour to clear away those unkind thoughts of my poor Edward from your own heart."

"Your *poor* Edward!" repeated Catharine, smiling sadly; "I wish I could banish those thoughts of him which at this moment force themselves upon me." She turned away to conceal her tears; but quickly recovering herself, "We must not delay, my dear Madam; let us send for Mr. Gray directly, and tell him to have the road opened." She laid her hand on the bell-rope, but stopt; and smiling faintly, said, "I must not tell them their master is just coming home with tears in my eyes. They may, perhaps, see me look still more sad, however, after he is come," added she, pulling the cord.

A servant appeared.

"John, Mr. Dunallan is to be home in a day or two." The man's countenance brightened with joy. "My master, Madam!"

"Yes, John, and we wish to see Mr. Gray immediately."

John hurried away to tell the joyful tidings to the other servants, and their happy exclamations reached even the apartment where Catharine was.

Mrs. Oswald looked at her; Catharine smiled sadly. "I know, my dear Madam, how much he is beloved," said she.

Mr. Gray soon appeared, his countenance radiant with joy. "What happy news, Madam! this will be a joyful day for Arnmore!"

"Yes, Mr. Gray; and I wish to ask you whether it will be necessary to clear the roads?"

"I thought of that, Madam, the moment John came to fetch me, and sent off a man to examine. I shall, if you please, now go myself."

Catharine begged he would.

Soon all was bustle. Every servant in the house seemed anxious to assist in hastening Dunallan's return, by clearing away every impediment. In a short time, all the snow near the house was out of sight; and that on the road in the avenue was quickly disappearing. Catharine became more and more sad in the general joy, and retired to her own apartment to conceal a melancholy so unsuitable. She partook, however, in the restlessness which pervaded the whole family. She could settle to nothing, but to dreams of the future, which were at times too painful, and at other times too softening to be indulged. When obliged again to join the others, the happy looks of Mrs. Oswald, Helen's congratulations, and the boundless joy of the children, overcame

both her sadness and her apprehensions for the future, at least for a time; but nothing could banish for long the idea of her first meeting with Dunallan. She thought if that was once over, she would know every thing; his manner, then, would teach her all she had to hope or fear.

Catharine never felt more relieved, than when the hour arrived to separate for the night. She longed for the undisturbed quiet of her own apartment; but here she had to meet the joyful exclamations of Martin, whose unusual loquacity, and delighted looks, she felt unwilling for a time to check.

“Never did I see such joy,” said Martin; “and it is chiefly on your account, Ma’am.”

“On my account!”

“Yes, Ma’am, the people say you will now be rewarded for all your goodness to them in Mr. Dunallan’s absence; and for your charities to his poor, and your care of the young. I am sure I do not know, Ma’am, whether they love you or Mr. Dunallan most; but, to be sure, they say you were made for each other, and to be a blessing to all around you.”

Catharine only sighed, and soon dismissing Martin, attempted to collect her ideas, and prepare for the future, whatever it might bring. She had long before this made herself fully acquaint-

ed with the duties prescribed in Scripture to those in the married state. "These must now be my rule," thought she, "whatever Dunallan's conduct to me may be." She again recalled those duties, and prayed earnestly for power to fulfil her part, independent of Dunallan's performance of his. Her mind became composed, and she began to perceive those mercies in her present situation, which she had now learnt to remark, were always mixed in the cup of suffering. "How thankful ought I to feel!" thought she, "that in my duties there is nothing difficult or revolting to me. I am commanded to love this husband; he might have been such as to excite only disgust; but, on the contrary, my duty is too easy. I am commanded to submit myself to him; this too, is most easy, superior as he is; had he been otherwise, how would my proud heart have rebelled. I may watch unnoticed till I discover his wishes, and then attempt to submit to them whatever they are." Catharine wept while she formed this plan for the future; yet there was something not unpleasing in the idea of thus fulfilling the duty of the wife of Dunallan, cold and unkind as she now expected to find him.

Next morning, Catharine again renewed her attempts to gain that composure and self-command she foresaw she would require. She sought

them by those means she had never yet found to fail, when perseveringly applied for; and when she again met Mrs. Oswald, the calmness and elevation, and composure of her looks, betrayed the peace she enjoyed.

Mrs. Oswald was alone—her countenance brightened. “My love, your looks delight me: your hour this morning has been happily spent; you have learnt to regard the future with juster expectations.”

“I have been attempting to learn, my dear kind Mrs. Oswald, to look for whatever is sent me as an intended blessing, however painful I may feel it, or however humbling to my proud nature.”

“Well, my love, that is best, because you cannot be disappointed.”

After breakfast Catharine went to visit her school. The children themselves had kept the path from thence to the castle free from snow, though the task had not been an easy one, from the frequent showers that had fallen. On this day the wind was high and piercingly cold, and drifted the snow so as to make walking very unpleasant; but Catharine was of too ardent a disposition to be deterred from what she considered a duty by such impediments; and, wrapped in her large cloak, her complexion brilliantly heighten-

ed by the cold and exercise, she soon reached her school. The universal joy had also arrived here; the children could scarcely attend, and even their old, and usually grave and silent schoolmistress seemed to have forgotten every thing but Mr. Dunallan's return.

“The children have all learnt more than you desired, Madam, that they may show how much they love you; for, if you remember, Madam, you said once, that if they wished to prove that they felt obliged for your kindness, as they said they did, they must do so by being busy good children in Mr. Dunallan's absence.”

The children blushed and smiled, and Catharine soon found that their love for her had made them wonderfully busy indeed.

“But Dunallan will take no interest in all this now!” thought she, as the girls showed her all they had learnt; then recollecting that the good was equally accomplished by storing the memories of the young creatures around her with the most useful of all knowledge, she mentally thanked heaven that any cause had produced so good an effect.

Catharine spent longer than usual with her school. When she returned, she retired to her own apartment, and, tranquil and composed, she felt, that even now she could meet Dunallan with

little emotion, "and in a day or two," thought she, "I shall be quite prepared for whatever I may have to feel."

The short day was closing in when she again joined Mrs. Oswald in the drawing-room. It had continued stormy and gloomy. Mrs. Oswald and the children stood at a window. Catharine joined them.

"The people continue to clear away the snow as it falls," said Mrs. Oswald; "I cannot convince them that there is no chance of Edward's coming to-day."

"Look! look! aunt Dunallan," exclaimed little Mary; "is not that a carriage moving far away among the trees?"

"A carriage!" repeated Catharine, "surely not;" her heart began to beat quick. "Can it be possible Mr. Dunallan may come sooner than _____?"

"It is, it is, a carriage!" exclaimed the child. "I see it quite plain."

Catharine stooped to look in the same direction. "It is indeed," said she, turning to Mrs. Oswald, and becoming quite pale.

Mrs. Oswald now perceived it also. "Thank God!" exclaimed she, clasping her hands joyfully, "it must be Edward."

The carriage now approached rapidly, and the

people who had been employed in clearing away the snow, showed by their joyful gestures that it contained their master.

“ Let us be ready to receive him in the hall !” exclaimed Mrs. Oswald ; “ come, my Catharine.” Catharine hesitated. The children flew out of the room. “ Will you not at least meet him kindly, Catharine ?”

“ Would he wish it, Madam ?” asked Catharine, pale and trembling, and tears starting into her eyes.

“ Surely, my Catharine; at any rate it is right ; it is proper you should.”

“ Then I will, Madam.”

“ Lean on me then, my love, for you tremble sadly,” said Mrs. Oswald, taking Catharine’s arm in hers, and hurrying her out of the room.

The hall door was opened by the servants, who now respectfully retired to a distance, and left Mrs. Oswald, Catharine, and the children, to receive Dunallan, whose carriage rapidly approached. The wind whistled through the large hall, and moved the pictures from the walls ; the children stood in the cold blast, their eyes eagerly bent on the carriage, but constantly dimmed by the tears produced by the piercing breeze. Catharine’s dress and her hair were disturbed, but she felt it not.

“What a reception for you, my dear Edward!” said Mrs. Oswald, as she observed the wind drift the snow into a window of his carriage, which he had let down as he approached; “but you will find warmth and comfort soon,” added she, pressing Catharine’s hand in hers.

“Will he leave all the cold behind him?” said Catharine.

“For shame, my Catharine. If you value your own happiness—if you value his happiness, receive him kindly,” whispered Mrs. Oswald.

The carriage stopt, and Catharine’s heart seemed to stop beating. The door was instantly opened, and she saw that it was Dunallan. She saw him alight, but not with the quickness of joy; he approached.

“My dear aunt! Catharine!” he pressed her to his breast, and put his cold cheek to hers for an instant; then hurried from her, and clasped his aunt—then the children, fondly to his heart.

“How dreadfully cold you are, dear Dunallan,” said Mrs. Oswald; “do come into the warm room.”

Dunallan stopt to notice, with his usual friendly kindness, the servants who had now crowded into the hall. Catharine stopt unconsciously also. When Dunallan turned to go into the warm apartment, he held out his hand for her; she gave it him, but not readily.

“ You fear I shall chill you, Catharine,” said he, in a low tone of voice, as they entered the room.

“ Oh no,” replied she, eagerly, and taking his hand in both of hers, “ you are indeed terribly cold,” said she, gently.

Dunallan looked at her for a moment, then withdrew his hand almost rudely, and turning hastily from her, stooped down to caress the children who clung about him. Catharine, abashed, and deeply hurt, retired to a sofa, where she was shaded from the light of the fire, which Mrs. Oswald, anxious again to see the countenance of her beloved nephew, now made blaze with most unmerciful brightness. But Dunallan seemed unwilling to gratify this wish of his aunt's; he continued for some time to fondle the children, so as to completely conceal his face.

“ We did not hope to see you so soon, my dear Edward,” said Mrs. Oswald.

“ I have been anxious to get home,” replied he; “ I have reason for being so, and did not remain in London a moment after I had settled the business regarding my mission abroad, and there was little to settle.”

“ Did you find the roads open every where?”

“ Every where. I feared I might be stopped near home, but that, I might have foreseen, you, my dear aunt, would prevent.”

“Catharine, at least, did,” replied Mrs. Oswald; “for I really had not thought of it till she reminded me.”

“Catharine!” repeated Dunallan, looking towards where she sat.

Catharine was silent, indeed her heart was too full to allow her to speak. She was now struck, however, with the change in Dunallan’s looks. He was thin and pale; and there was a langour in his eyes which she immediately supposed must have been occasioned by illness; indeed his whole appearance was so different from what her imagination had of late pictured him, that she forgot all her causes of displeasure.

“Edward!” exclaimed Mrs. Oswald, “you have been ill! I am sure you have. Why did you conceal it from us?”

“I fear you have, Mr. Dunallan,” said Catharine, in a voice of the deepest interest.

Some very painful recollections seemed to return to Dunallan’s memory, and changed the expression of his countenance to a graveness almost stern. “I have not been one day seriously ill, in health at least, since I left Arnmore,” replied he; and then putting the children gently from him, he rose and stood so as to turn his face from the light.

Catharine now felt only for him. “I have

guessed too truly," thought she, "he has had some cause of uneasiness quite as serious as any I have feared." Aspasia—another attachment—flashed upon her thoughts, but she turned from them.

A painful silence ensued. Catharine felt anxious to relieve Dunallan, and, scarcely knowing what she said, made some inquiry regarding a Russian winter. He entered eagerly into the subject, which soon led to others; and then he succeeded, as in former times, so completely in interesting his hearers, as to draw their thoughts from any other subject but that on which he conversed. He described some characters with whom he had associated while abroad, and entered freely and openly into the nature of the affair which had induced him to leave his country; expressing, with much feeling, his gratitude to heaven for the rapid and unexpected success which had attended his efforts, and for the ease with which every difficulty had been overcome. He had at first stood near Catharine while he spoke, he then seated himself by her. The light was full upon him while she still continued in the shade, so that she could more easily observe the expressions of his countenance; but, though animated, he continued to look grave and melancholy. The children again hung upon him, and

he returned their little caresses with the utmost tenderness. Mrs. Oswald, too, had brought her chair close to where he sat, and regarded him with looks of the greatest anxiety and concern.

“Dear affectionate little creatures!” said Dunallan, pressing the children fondly to his breast, “absence seems to make you feel only more kindly.”

“Aunt Dunallan says that is always the case for those we really love,” said the eldest child.

“Does aunt Dunallan say so?” replied Dunallan, stooping to caress the child so as to conceal his face, which had in a moment been again overcast.

“Yes, uncle, aunt Dunallan has often said so when you were away.”

Dunallan continued to lean over the child in silence, while she proceeded, “You know, uncle Dunallan, the morning you went away you told Mary and I, that we must not allow aunt Dunallan to forget you, so we talked to her every day about you.”

“And you teased aunt Dunallan, I suppose, till she told you it was unnecessary to remind her so often of me, because she always felt most affectionately for those who were absent.”

“Oh! no, no, uncle, aunt Dunallan never tired of our speaking of you.”

“Oh! never,” interrupted little Mary; “for often when she was too busy reading, or thinking, to mind me when I spoke to her, I have said something about you, and then she put away the book, and took me up on her lap, and kissed me, and listened to me while I spoke of you, and said I was a good child to remember so well about you, for I ought to love you more than any body else in the world.”

Dunallan pressed the child fondly to his heart, and then looking at Catharine with the only smile of real pleasure which had yet brightened his countenance, “You have succeeded most astonishingly, Catharine,” said he, “in obliging yourself to meet all my wishes, however unreasonable—this last was too severe.”

The expression of Dunallan’s countenance, and the softened tone of his voice, were so completely at variance with his words, that Catharine could not reply, and felt quite relieved when Helen, at that moment, entered the room. She rose to meet her friend; who seemed about to retreat, on observing the party so seated as to confirm her fears that she must be felt an intruder.

“Come away, my dear girl,” said Mrs. Oswald. “This young lady, Edward, has preferred

being with Catharine during this dreary season to all the gaieties of a town life.”

The bashful Helen was unable, at any time, to speak to a stranger without embarrassment, much less so to Dunallan, of whom she had formed the most exalted idea. She hurriedly curtsied to him; then glancing round, as if for some retreat, took possession of Catharine's shaded corner in the sofa. Catharine also looked round for a retreat, for Dunallan's eyes were fixed upon her as she now stood in the light. She turned away, for she had not yet met his looks, and unconsciously avoided them. At this moment, however, dinner was announced. Dunallan did not, as formerly, offer his arm to Catharine, but stood coldly back till the ladies passed, and then followed them into the dining-room. All was here in a blaze of light; and Catharine, seated opposite to Dunallan, could no longer avoid that interchange of looks which betrays far more than language can conceal. Conscious that his eyes always returned to her, the moment after he had, with his usual gentle and winning politeness, attended to his other guests, she felt confused and embarrassed. Dunallan, however, became less grave. He attempted to draw the blushing Helen into conversation, and succeeded wonderfully in finding subjects of sufficient inter-

est to lead her to forget that he was a stranger, and to converse easily with him. His countenance at times expressed the vivacity which usually brightened it; but a moment of thought destroyed those expressions, and restored languor and melancholy to his looks and manner. Catharine felt certain that her fears and conjectures were too well founded; but, as the evening advanced, she hoped that in one supposition she had been mistaken. Dunallan, she felt, was pleased with every mark of regard for him on her part. His smile of pleasure at what little Mary had told him was followed by looks of equal delight when any thing occurred to prove how much he had been the object of her thoughts during his absence. Yet his looks, when turned on her, did not express the same feelings as formerly. She even thought at moments, that he was less respectful to her; but he far more frequently regarded her with interest, and at least mildness.

After tea Helen left the room, saying she had letters to write. Catharine guessed that her real motive was, to leave Dunallan at liberty to converse with his family, unrestrained by the presence of a stranger, and she sighed to think how little such attentions would be valued.

“ Talking of letters, my dear Edward,” said

Mrs. Oswald, "I must say you were not quite so good a correspondent during your last absence as formerly."

Catharine started at this sudden introduction of a subject she hoped Mrs. Oswald had intended to avoid, and becoming very pale, turned her eyes towards her with the most alarmed and beseeching expression; but Mrs. Oswald seemed determined not to see her; she did not look at Dunallan either, but kept her eyes fixed on her work: "Your letters were 'few and far between,'" continued she.

Catharine's heart beat almost to suffocation; Dunallan did not immediately reply; and, unconscious of what she did, she half rose, looked towards the door, as if to escape, and then sat down again becoming still paler.

"Do not be alarmed, Catharine," said Dunallan, with a low and forced calmness of voice, "you have no cause—be assured, you never shall have cause. Your peace of mind, whatever concerns you, is still as much my care as ever." He approached her as he spoke; she looked up, and saw him greatly agitated.

"Mr. Dunallan," said Catharine, with much emotion, "do not be so constantly anxious about my peace of mind—believe me, I am satisfied with the share of it which heaven has allotted to me."

Dunallan looked at her for a moment, as if he did not understand her, then said, "Believe my assurances, Catharine, and rely on them whatever happens." Then turning to Mrs. Oswald, "My dear aunt, I must request you for once to forgive my being reserved with you. I confess I have been a very bad correspondent since I last left you; but the cause, I entreat, you will never ask me to explain. I know you will not, when I tell you, that even the least reference to the subject is painful to me. To you, Catharine," added he, turning to her, "I am always ready to be perfectly open on this, and every other subject, should you ever wish it." Dunallan then left the room.

"Oh, Madam!" exclaimed Catharine, "what have you done! Mr. Dunallan, I see, thinks it is I who wish for an explanation."

"Forgive me, my Catharine, I thought I was doing right. Things are more serious than I supposed. My dear Edward! I fear something very serious has happened." Mrs. Oswald seemed extremely uneasy.

"Whatever has happened, my dear Madam," said Catharine warmly, "let us not add to Mr. Dunallan's too evident unhappiness, by suffering him to suppose that we regard him as improperly reserved to us. I cannot again speak on this

painful subject to him, but he must know instantly that I shall never, never ask any explanation." Catharine then, as quickly as her trembling hands would permit, wrote these few lines :

" I entreat you, Mr. Dunallan, to forget what has just passed. Believe me, nothing would have induced me—nothing ever shall induce me—to intrude even in thought into your feelings, or into the motives of any part of your conduct, which, to me, has ever been such as to inspire a gratitude which, were I not satisfied to owe it to you, would be painfully oppressive.

C. DUNALLAN."

Catharine gave her note to Mrs. Oswald: " May I ask you to take this to him, my dear Madam; and perhaps also to exculpate me from the suspicion, that I think myself entitled to know any thing he wishes to conceal? You know, my dear Mrs. Oswald, I never did."

Mrs. Oswald took the note, " I shall do all you wish, my love."

Catharine waited in anxiety for Mrs. Oswald's return—at last she approached. Catharine met her.

" I do not comprehend my nephew at present,"

said she; “ I never before found the least difficulty in understanding all he did or said.

“ How, my dear Madam?”

“ When I went to him, he met me with his usual gentleness. He was walking slowly across the library with his arms folded on his breast, and so deep in thought, he did not observe my entrance. When he did, he smiled with his own sweetness of expression, and entreated me to forgive him if he had said any thing too warmly. ‘ You would,’ added he, ‘ if you knew how painful any allusion to my correspondence with home was to me.’ I said I had come with a note from you, and ——. He did not wait to hear what more I had to say, but eagerly took your note. He seemed disappointed, however, and was much displeased with its contents. Again and again he read it, then crushed it indignantly in his hand, and turned as if to throw it in the fire, but did not. I then said, that it was I only who had wished for an explanation, and that you wished him to know this. He again appeared displeased, but said, “ Tell Catharine, I think I understand her. All shall remain as she wishes; nor will I at present attempt to *intrude into her feelings.*” These last words he repeated rather ironically.

“ What can he mean?” exclaimed Catharine; “ but I have said that I will not attempt, even in

thought to account for his present conduct. I think I have discovered what my own duty is. To fulfil that must now be my only aim."

Mrs. Oswald soon became silent and thoughtful. Catharine, too, began to think deeply, and in forming plans for the future, for a time completely forgot the present. She soon determined in her own mind, that she could best fulfil her duty to Dunallan, by carefully avoiding any reference to the past; by herself attempting to be as cheerful as possible, and thus remove from him every cause of uneasiness on her account; and by using every means in her power to draw his thoughts away from those unhappy recollections which seemed to oppress him. "These must be my duties," thought she, "whatever has caused his present dejection. I must not inquire into that, neither must I yield to pride, which might deter me from attempting to overcome whatever has produced the change in his feelings towards me, or from seeking his regard. It must be proper for the wife of Dunallan to possess his affections. I shall make the attempt, because both will be happy if I succeed; if not, I shall at least have done my duty. I may be mortified and humbled, but I have now learnt that it is good for me to be so. Pride and false delicacy would *naturally* have been my guides. And

the struggle must be, duty against pride, and against my nature."

Thus far had Catharine proceeded in her plans for the future, when a servant entered to say, that Mr. Dunallan waited for the ladies in the library. With a beating heart Catharine proceeded thither. Dunallan, with his habitual politeness, recognised their entrance, but immediately again fixed his eyes on the book in his hand. He stood till the ladies were seated, and Catharine, recollecting her newly formed resolutions, uninvited, took her former place beside him.

When the service was over, Dunallan turned to Catharine, "You persevered in reading to the servants, I find," said he, in a grave, calm tone of voice.

"Yes," replied Catharine, "I kept up the form. It was a pleasure to me even to do that."

"You did all, Catharine, that any one could do. Every religious duty is form, unless it is blessed from above. I hope and trust your reading the Scriptures was so; and I am certain," added he, in a lower tone of voice, "you have my warmest gratitude for so perseveringly fulfilling my request."

"It is I who ought to be grateful," replied Catharine, "for having been led to fulfil a duty so useful to myself."

“Have you really found it so, Catharine?” asked Dunallan, on observing Mrs. Oswald and Helen engaged in conversation at some distance, and looking earnestly at Catharine as he spoke.

She blushed, “I hope I have. If you think I deceive myself, I know you will tell me.”

“It is too, too easy to deceive ourselves,” replied Dunallan, emphatically; “but the study of the Bible, with the sincere desire of understanding it, we are sure, are the best means of enlightening any mind and conscience.”

“I do hope so,” observed Catharine, with an expression of alarm and timidity on her countenance from the earnestness of Dunallan’s manner.

“Be assured they are,” said he, more gently, and turning from her, he joined Mrs. Oswald and Helen.

Mrs. Oswald soon proposed separating for the night. Her nephew, she said, must require repose. Dunallan had, in conversation, just betrayed his having travelled for the two preceding nights. “For what reason?” thought Catharine, but she checked her curiosity, and instantly seconded Mrs. Oswald’s proposal to retire.

CHAPTER IV.

CATHARINE rose very early next morning, long before the late and clouded sun, that she might have her now indispensable hour of solitude and reflection, and that she might also, before the family again met, visit a poor old woman, who, in the view of approaching death, seemed to find great consolation in her kindness. The sun was still so low in the sky as to be concealed behind the woods of Arnmore, when Catharine returned from her expedition. She found the family were just assembling in the library, and hurrying off her walking dress, she hastened to join them. She was, however, the last.

“I hear you were out, my love,” whispered Mrs. Oswald, as Catharine passed her, “was that prudent at such a season?”

Catharine’s already brightened complexion became more glowing; “I shall account to you afterwards, my dear madam, for my early walk. I hoped to have returned sooner,—but, Mr. Dunallan, do not let me now detain you.”

Dunallan immediately proceeded.

When the servants were again withdrawn, Mrs. Oswald renewed her inquiries. "Where in the world were you, Catharine?"

"I shall tell you at another time, my dear madam," replied she, observing that Dunallan's eyes were fixed upon her.

Dunallan turned away, and immediately left the room.

"Oh! I have offended him!" exclaimed Catharine. "How wrong! I ought to have no concealments with him."

"Indeed, my love, he is quite unaccountable," said Mrs. Oswald. "Before you came he seemed quite miserable about you, and reproached me almost with severity for suffering you to expose your precious health in such a manner; yet when you appeared, he assumed a coldness of looks which I am sure were a mere disguise. There is some strange mystery in all this. But tell me, Catharine, where have you been?"

Catharine satisfied Mrs. Oswald's curiosity in a few words, and described the scene she had just witnessed; they then proceeded to the breakfast-room. Catharine intended immediately, on again meeting him, to mention to Dunallan the object of her early walk, but he instantly began to talk on another subject. He looked more himself this morning, though still looking ill, and at times

very grave, yet he became more cheerful every moment. Catharine's ease and playfulness returned with his returning smiles, and again, as formerly, she began to look, unconsciously, for the expression that what she had just said, produced in his countenance, before she felt satisfied that she was right.

Mrs. Oswald listened with delight to a conversation which seemed to promise returning confidence and happiness. It was soon interrupted, however, by a servant announcing a visitor; "Doctor Angus, the worthy clergyman of the parish." Dunallan for a moment seemed disappointed, but the happy looks of the good man, immediately recalled his kinder feelings, and he hastened to meet him with the utmost cordiality.

"My dear Sir," said the Doctor, "excuse this early visit. I could not resist coming to welcome you home."

"Thank you, Doctor," said Dunallan, "I intended to have visited you this morning."

"Your horses are now at the door, dear Sir," said the Doctor, "which induced me to intrude before you went out."

"Do you mean to ride this very cold day, Mr. Dunallan?" asked Catharine, anxiously; "surely a little rest after your late fatigues would be better."

Dunallan smiled ; “ I do not think that *you*, Catharine, are much entitled to prescribe care and avoiding of cold, and so on——.”

“ Indeed,” said the Doctor, “ if Mrs. Dunallan did not prove so incontrovertibly by her looks that she does not suffer from her disregard of weather, and every difficulty, when bent on doing good, I should say she exposed herself rather too much. You, Sir,” continued the Doctor, anxiously, “ do not appear to have of late enjoyed the blessing of health so perfectly.”

“ You are mistaken, Doctor, I have enjoyed perfect health,” replied Dunallan hurriedly, and turning away, but instantly recovering himself, “ I am, indeed, delighted and thankful to find Catharine look so well.”

The Doctor perceived he had touched on some unpleasant subject, and turning to Catharine, said, “ I find, Madam, that you saw poor old Elspeth this morning.”

“ I did,” replied Catharine, blushing.

“ She has at last got away,” said the Doctor.

“ Gone?” asked Catharine.

“ Yes, Madam. She lived only about an hour after you left her.”

Catharine’s eyes filled with tears ; “ I did not think it would have been quite so soon ; were you with her at the last, Doctor ?”

“ I was, madam. Her last words were, ‘ Tell my dear lady, that all is light now. I need no priest but the one everlasting High Priest—my lady told me truth—she read me truth—my poor soul is safe—He will cast out none who come to Him—peace ! peace !’ she leant back with an expression of such joy, I cannot describe it, and expired.”

Catharine was much moved.

“ Of whom do you speak ?” asked Dunallan, with great interest.

“ Of the old widow, to whom you, Sir, gave the cottage on the edge of the lake.”

“ Oh, I remember her. She was a Catholic.”

“ Yes, and never would suffer me to speak to her on the subject of religion,” replied the Doctor, “ till about a month ago. I do not know by what means Mrs. Dunallan overcame her ignorance and superstitious prejudices.”

“ I !” exclaimed Catharine, “ I did nothing in the world but attempt to persuade her to read the Bible. At first she would not without the permission of her priest ; but he was at such a distance she could not go to him. I then began by repeating parts of the Bible to her, and she was at last prevailed on to listen while I read it. She then became so eager to hear it, that she used to entreat her neighbours to read to her ;

and she learnt its contents with wonderful quickness. Of late she has thought death very near, and her former ideas regarding the necessity of having a priest to perform the ceremonies of her church, and prepare her for death, have made her at times very uneasy. I am so ignorant myself, that I know not well how to argue from the Bible against these superstitious notions, but I searched for such passages as I thought suited to convince her, that man, at that moment, could make no alteration on the real state of her soul; that her priest's prayers would be of no avail, unless she herself had a heart to pray, and if she had, she might be assured that God had bestowed it upon her, and would listen to her requests. I found many parts of Scripture to confirm this, and knew nothing better to say."

"Nothing better was required, you see," said Dunallan, with much emotion.

"Ah! Catharine, you have been so highly favoured as to have been made the means of saving an immortal soul," said Mrs. Oswald.

"Mrs. Dunallan has, indeed, been blessed with great success in all her endeavours to do good," said the Doctor. "You will be surprised, Sir, to see what effects all your plans have had under your lady's care."

“And still more under yours, my good Doctor,” said Catharine.

“Ah! my dear lady,” replied the Doctor, “I have been here twenty years; that answers for my part, for though I had seen some reform in the morals of my flock, I must now say, that the change has been greater since Mr. Dunallan and you, Madam, came here, than during all the many years before.”

“We must forget the past, Doctor,” said Dunallan; “you know there were many causes formerly for your want of success. But, pray, tell me more about the people.”

“Well, Sir, your library is doing immense good. Ever since your lady has attended in person when the books were given out, and in her irresistible way has recommended particular ones to those who applied, it is astonishing how the people have improved.”

“But, Catharine, how in the world can you know what books are most proper for each applicant?” asked Dunallan, his countenance expressing the greatest pleasure while he looked for her answer.

“Indeed, I do not know,” replied she, “but Dr. Angus tells me the characters of the people and of the books, and I just recommend what I think will be most suitable, and they like this at-

attention on my part, and read carefully what I recommend, because, I suppose, they think their doing so will please you."

Dunallan smiled.

"And then," resumed the Doctor, "your lady's and Mrs. Oswald's constant attendance at church, morning and evening, and their exemplary deportment during the service, have worked a wonderful change. Now every body comes to church, and every one tries to listen; and indeed, Sir, the good effects of this follow me to my study, for it is discouraging to preach without being attended to. Now I feel it a delight to prepare instructions for my attentive people. So much good can one family in an exalted situation do, who are guided by the pure precepts of religion. Now it is really the desire of the people to receive information on that subject which is of more importance than all others; and many, particularly among the young, begin to evince the most earnest concern respecting their immortal interests."

Dunallan's eyes glistened while the Doctor continued to enumerate the many improvements which had taken place during his absence, and when, after nearly two hours, the good man took his leave, he still continued to converse on the subject with Mrs. Oswald and Catharine. Helen

soon left the room. Mrs. Oswald then found some excuse for going, but her absence had not the effect she desired; Dunallan became silent and embarrassed, and Catharine felt his embarrassment infectious. Dunallan seemed to perceive this, and saying hurriedly, "I do not attempt to thank you, Catharine, for all your care of my people, but believe me, it is because I cannot,"—he was leaving the room, when Catharine said,

"I entreat you, do not pain me by thinking, that what has been my greatest pleasure can have been any trouble to me. May I ask you, never again to mention your *gratitude* on this subject?"

Dunallan stopt. "Oh! Catharine!" exclaimed he, earnestly, "I wish I could understand you. Is it possible you can, even on such subjects as these, wish to ——— but pardon me, I had almost forgot my promise." He then hastily quitted the room, leaving Catharine surprised, and alarmed by his manner and inexplicable words; but all attempts to unravel his meaning, she found were vain.

CHAPTER V.

A WEEK passed away, and nothing occurred to lead to any explanation of Dunallan's conduct: he seemed, however, to become less unhappy every day, and his warmly expressed approbation of all Catharine had done in his absence,—his gratitude,—his gentle attentions, and ever pleasing conversation, gave a new interest to her existence. His frequent appearance of melancholy, still, however, gave her continual uneasiness, while his evident suspicion, at times, of her sincerity, led her to fear she had in some way injured herself in his opinion; and kind, and attentive, and gentle, as he ever was, there was yet a something in his manner which deterred her from asking any explanation; or, indeed, from ever being quite at ease with him. Dunallan, too, did not now seek her society, but, on the contrary, seemed carefully to avoid being left alone with her.

One evening, on receiving his letters, Catharine observed, that after reading one, Dunallan became extremely pale; he looked anxiously at

her, but she instantly turned away her eyes, and felt grieved that he should know she had seen his emotion. During that evening he was even more than usually gentle and attentive in his manner to her. The idea that Dunallan had, during his absence, met with some amiable being to whom he had involuntarily given his affections, had long and frequently presented itself to Catharine's mind; but the idea was so painful, she had the more easily succeeded in fulfilling what she considered a duty, by banishing as much as she possibly could, every thought that led to the subject. Dunallan's letter of this night, however, she could not help believing was connected with this painful idea, and this thought rendered his attentions less pleasing.

Next morning his manner was even more soothingly gentle than the evening before; but the same ideas still possessed her mind. She admired Dunallan's attempt, as she thought, to be kind to his poor unloved wife, but each new and gentle attention increased her sadness, and as soon as breakfast was over she rose to leave the room. She went to a window as she passed. The snow had again fallen as deep as ever, and she felt uncertain whether she should on that day visit her school, which she had done less frequently since Dunallan's return. She was sur-

prised on observing the road in the avenue opened for a carriage.

“Who is going out in a carriage?” asked she; but it instantly struck her that Dunallan was again about to leave Arnmore. She felt a sickness come over her heart, but turned away, for Dunallan had followed her to the window.

“I received a letter last night, Catharine, which——” he stopt——

“Which must take you from home, Mr. Dunallan,” said Catharine, in a cold but hurried tone of voice.

“Not me, Catharine,” said Dunallan.

“Who, then?” asked Catharine, turning round as she spoke.

He looked much distressed, “My letter was from Dunallan Castle.”

“And my father is ill:—Oh! Mr. Dunallan, how could you conceal this from me! My father! my dear father!”

“Be composed, dearest Catharine, I have only attempted to save you from unnecessary pain. You could not have travelled till the road was opened.”

“Forgive me, Mr. Dunallan; you are always kind; but now you will allow me to go to him.” She burst into tears.

“ All is ready for your departure, dearest Catharine.”

“ But is my father very ill ?”

Dunallan gave her a letter from Elizabeth.

“ I must be alone when I read this,” said she, turning to go.

She trembled excessively. Dunallan supported her to the door of her apartment. She there found Martin making preparations for her journey, and Mrs. Oswald herself assisting her. Ah ! my dear, kind Mrs. Oswald, that is too, too much !”

Mrs. Oswald pressed her to her heart. “ Do not think of me, my love ; think only at present of the mercy and kindness of your Heavenly Father, to those who put their trust in Him, and place all your confidence in his promised care and presence.”

Catharine could not speak, but hastening into her dressing-room, threw herself upon her knees, and in that posture, opened Elizabeth’s letter.

“ I have delayed as long as I think I ought, to give you the pain, my own Catharine, which I now fear I must. Your dear father was taken ill about a fortnight ago. He did not wish any one to be informed of it, or to come to him at this severe season ; but I learnt it from his physician, who had been sent for from Edinburgh, and who

considered it proper to acquaint me with his illness. My mother is too delicate to think of travelling at this season of the year, much as she wished it. I therefore came here immediately. I found my dear uncle looking very ill, though not suffering much. He has become gradually worse since my arrival, and though he has positively forbidden my acquainting you with his illness, I dare no longer conceal it from you. He is constantly talking of his beloved child, but says he would not for the world you knew that he was ill, for he knows you would attempt to come to him, and that the roads near Arnmore must at present be entirely shut up. He often expresses a wish to see Mr. Dunallan, who, he supposes is now at Arnmore, but seems to think Mr. Dunallan regards him with so much dislike, that he would not willingly come to him."

Catharine hurried over the remaining part of Elizabeth's letter; only one idea was now present to her mind,—her father's life was in danger! She prayed earnestly for his recovery; she prayed for strength and composure of mind for herself, that she might be enabled to attend him, whatever should be the event, without disturbing him by her emotions. She ardently desired that Dunallan would agree to her father's wish; and go to him; but she shrunk from the idea of mak-

ing the request, as she well knew with what coldness, at least, he regarded Lord Dunallan. Her father's danger, however, and the recollection of his utter neglect of all that was necessary to prepare his soul for its eternal state, almost overpowered her, and soon overcoming every other feeling, she determined, at least, to attempt to induce Dunallan to accompany her to her father's sick room.

"All is ready, my love," said Mrs. Oswald, as Catharine hurriedly passed her. Catharine did not stay to reply, but proceeded towards the breakfast room. Dunallan, however, was in the hall, and seemed prepared to go out. He was himself giving directions to the servants, who were putting things into the carriage, which was to carry Catharine away. "Ah!" thought she, "he is going out to ride as usual, and only waits till I am gone." Her heart sunk, but again recollecting her father, she, almost in despair, approached him.

"Will you allow me to speak with you in private, Mr. Dunallan, for one moment?"

Dunallan started on hearing her voice, and immediately accompanied her to the nearest apartment.

"You will think I encroach on your goodness, Mr. Dunallan, but at this moment I cannot, I

ought not to think of any one but my father ; you know his danger ; you know, Mr. Dunallan, how little he regarded, how little he attempted to prepare,”—Catharine became breathless, and stopt.

“ My dearest Catharine, what do you wish ? Do not recall such remembrances.”

“ Oh ! I cannot banish them ; but it is not yet too late. My father wishes to see you, Mr. Dunallan—could you overcome your former feelings for him—could you forgive him all the misery he has cost you, and agree to his wish ; how irresistibly would such goodness convince him of the power and perfection of your principles !”

“ Most assuredly, Catharine, I will go to him if he wishes it ; I have nothing to forgive ; I only wanted your permission to accompany you, but dreaded asking it, lest at such a moment my presence should only have annoyed you. May I now hope you will suffer me to accompany you ?”

Catharine’s eyes filled with tears. “ How generously you always ——” she could say no more, tears choaked her utterance, and she hurried away.

In a few minutes Catharine and Dunallan were on their road to Dunallan Castle. Catharine felt the support Dunallan’s presence gave her. She felt her hopes reviving, because he spoke as if he

believed Lord Dunallan might yet recover. All his coldness of manner, too, was now gone. He seemed painfully uneasy lest she should suffer from the severity of the weather. He had completely wrapped her in a large fur pelisse, and soon threw another to the bottom of the carriage, to save her still more perfectly from the chill air; yet still seemed unsatisfied.

“I am quite warm and comfortable, Mr. Dunallan,” said Catharine, smiling sweetly. “Permit me to attend to your health now; this pelisse is far too beautiful to be trode upon.” She would have presented it to him, but he put it gently away.

“I am accustomed to cold, Catharine,” said he, smiling sadly; “I rather long for its bracing power. I wish it could penetrate to my soul, and renovate its strength also.”

Catharine looked surprised, Dunallan spoke with an expression so unlike his usual self-command. He turned away, and for some moments continued silent.

The country through which they passed was one immense and continued waste of untrodden snow. The day was dark and gloomy; not a breath of wind stirred the trees, as they stood bearing, to their smallest branches, their cold, soft load of snow.

Dunallan, however, soon began to converse with his usual power of exciting interest; and heavy, and apprehensive for the future, as Catharine's heart was, she felt surprised when the short day closed in. The road had been cleared wherever it was necessary, and fresh horses were ready at every stage. Dunallan had not proposed her stopping for a moment on the road, so that, at an early hour in the evening, Catharine perceived that they were approaching Dunallan Castle. Her apprehensions again returned with overpowering force. She entreated Dunallan to stop the carriage at one of the cottages in the road. "They will all know how he is," said she.

Dunallan immediately stopped the carriage, but told Catharine he had sent forward a servant whom they would soon meet. At this moment the man rode up to the carriage.

"My Lord is better to-day, Sir," said he, in answer to Dunallan's inquiries.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Catharine, bursting into tears.

"Thank God!" repeated Dunallan, energetically.

Catharine was now all impatience to embrace her father. "Should this illness be the means of leading my father to attend to religion," said

she thoughtfully, "I shall not regret it. Perhaps it is thus that God has been pleased to answer my prayers for him. But what am I, that God should listen to my poor, unworthy prayers? Tell me, Mr. Dunallan, do you think it presumption or enthusiasm to suppose that God does any thing in consequence of our prayers?"

"No, Catharine, I think it presumptuous in the last degree, to dare to disbelieve what God himself has declared to be the case; and he has said, that he is 'the hearer of prayer,' and that 'the prayer of the righteous availeth much.'"

"Ah, yes! but not such prayers as mine; from a heart so apt to wander from him—so evil—so occupied with trifles—so altogether unworthy; from a mind so ignorant and dark, that I can only at intervals form such ideas of him as to excite that love he demands, and feel in general only that dread of offending him which makes me tremble. Prayers from a mind in such a state cannot be acceptable."

"Pardon me, dear Catharine, I think, on the contrary, that, in your account of yourself, I see the very character which our heavenly Father has declared he will regard, 'to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word.'"

Catharine melted into tears, "Ah, thank you,

thank you, a thousand times, for these precious words ! I shall not soon forget them. How sweetly comforting they are !”

“ If you indeed wish not to forget them, Catharine,” replied Dunallan with extreme gentleness, “ and to feel that comfort they are graciously intended to bestow, thank Him whose words they are, and who alone can enlighten the mind.” Catharine remained silent ; she was touched by Dunallan’s words, and by his gentle, yet earnest manner.

“ Do not be displeased with me, Catharine,” resumed he ; “ believe me, that, in thus venturing to risk offending you, on all occasions where your first and best interests are concerned, I prefer your real happiness to my own present comfort at least.”

“ Displease me !” repeated Catharine, “ I wish you saw my heart, Mr. Dunallan.”

“ Do you, Catharine ?” asked Dunallan in an incredulous tone of voice.

“ At this moment, Mr. Dunallan, I do.”

Dunallan was silent ; and, in a few minutes, they entered the grounds of Dunallan Castle. The moon was obscured by clouds, but still its light, joined to the brightness of the snow, enabled Catharine to trace the well-known scenery around her, while her feelings became flurried

and confused by the various ideas which now crowded into her mind. The dreariness of the wide expanse of snow—the melancholy occasion of her return to her early home—Dunallan's presence, which ever excited a deep, and now a painful interest, from his unaccountable conduct, contrasted with his irresistibly gentle and pleasing manners and conversation—her approaching meeting with her father—the pleasing hope of again seeing Elizabeth—all struggled for the first place in her thoughts, and by turns occupied it. At last the carriage stopt. Dunallan threw open the door on his side, and in a moment stood ready to assist Catharine's trembling attempts to hasten to Elizabeth; who stood within the great door of the hall to receive her. Dunallan almost carried her into the house.

“ My own Elizabeth !” “ My beloved Catharine !” exclaimed the friends, ardently embracing.

“ My kindest, dearest Elizabeth !” said Catharine, when they had reached the apartment to which Elizabeth led the way, “ you have been my father's successful nurse, and he is better.”

“ Yes, dearest Catharine, this day he has been less uneasy, I think.”

“ Less uneasy !” repeated Catharine, “ is that all !” She attempted in vain to be calm, and

burst into tears. Elizabeth attempted to sooth her, but in vain.

“Does he know I am coming, Elizabeth? May I see him now?”

“He knows you are coming, my dearest Catharine, and you will relieve him from his anxiety about you by seeing him immediately; but, my Catharine, you must, for his sake, be composed; you will find him altered in appearance.”

Catharine started and shuddered.

“A very slight and short illness greatly alters the appearance at times, dearest Catharine,” said Dunallan; “you must be prepared to expect this, but do not be alarmed;” then speaking in a lower tone of voice, “remember in whose merciful and compassionate hands his, and all our lives are, and trust all your anxieties and fears to him.”

Catharine instantly became composed. She turned to Elizabeth, “I *am* composed, Elizabeth; take me to my father.” She then left the room, internally imploring that support to which Dunallan had turned her thoughts.

It was more than an hour before Catharine again joined Dunallan; and, though her eyes showed traces of the tender nature of her meeting with her father, her countenance had resum-

ed, in some degree, its usual happy and lively expression.

“ My father is not so ill as I feared,” exclaimed she, on entering the room, “ I am sure he is not.”

Dunallan’s countenance instantly reflected the pleasure that glowed in hers. “ He has trusted to me to express his gratitude to you, Mr. Dunallan,” continued Catharine, “ for thus kindly indulging his wishes. He is anxious to see you, but is too much exhausted now. In the morning he hopes for that pleasure. And now, how shall I express both his gratitude and my own ?” added she.

“ By never mentioning the word to me, Catharine,” replied Dunallan ; “ for, whenever you do, I feel as if you meant to remind me how painful it is to be in the slightest degree obliged by one who has cost you so much unhappiness.”

“ Unhappiness !” repeated Catharine ; but Elizabeth’s entrance prevented her expressing the feelings Dunallan’s words and manner had inspired ; and, on reflection, she was glad she had been interrupted ; for, kind and anxious as his manner during this day had been, he had said nothing to do away her fears that some cause existed which led him to wish rather to avoid than to seek to excite her affection for him. She soon

returned to her father's apartment, and remained with him as long as his anxiety for her would suffer her to stay. She then lingered near the door of his room, till she heard all silent and quiet within; and, after praying for every blessing to rest upon him, she retired for the night.

Catharine ordered Martin to call her at an early hour next morning; but for once Martin was disobedient; and fatigue so far overcame her anxiety, that the late sun was completely risen when she awoke. She started from her pillow, and, dressing as hastily as she could, went immediately to the door of her father's apartment. His servant was in the anti-room. She inquired if her father was awake, and was informed that Mr. Dunallan had been with him for the last hour. Catharine rejoiced at this interview, and, determining not to interrupt it, was turning to go in quest of Elizabeth, when the door of her father's apartment was softly opened, and Dunallan himself appeared.

"How kind is this!" said she to him, her eyes filling as she spoke. Dunallan's own bore traces of recent softness. He inquired tenderly for Catharine's health.

"Quite, quite well. May I now go to my father, or shall I disturb him?"

"No, Catharine, you cannot disturb him: he

says your presence has restored to him all that he really values on earth."

"My dear father!" said Catharine tenderly, and turning hastily away to go to him.

He received her with eager fondness. After a few moments he began to talk of Dunallan.

"I had formed a most erroneous opinion both of him and of his religious sentiments, Catharine," said he. "He is the most feeling man I ever saw; and, instead of being severe and contemptuous, as I supposed his singular opinions led him to be, he has the humblest heart of any man I ever conversed with."

Catharine could not refrain from tears while her father continued thus to praise Dunallan.

"My dear father," said she, "you had indeed formed most erroneous notions of Mr. Dunallan. I too had suffered myself to be so prejudiced against him that I look back still with shame and grief to the time he formerly spent under your roof. Now, I hope we both know how to value him."

CHAPTER VI.

FOR the first fortnight Catharine scarcely ever left her father's room. He seemed revived by the presence of his beloved child, and to grudge losing sight of her for a moment. Dunallan's society soon also became almost as necessary to him as Catharine's. He constantly desired to have them both near him. Catharine was now, therefore, constantly seeing Dunallan, and, in such circumstances as to do away every feeling but that of gratitude. His gentleness to her father—his affectionate kindness, and feeling attentions, increased in proportion as Lord Dunallan's esteem and affection increased for him. His manner to herself—mild, gentle, and polite, but again reserved, made her very unhappy; yet she could not at times help thinking, that his coldness was in some degree assumed. Often, while employed in those tender cares which her father's situation required, she met Dunallan's eyes fixed upon her with looks of interest and admiration; but in vain did she attempt to conjecture what could be the cause of his coldness, real or assum-

ed. He was ever on the watch, also, lest she should suffer from fatigue, and to bear it for her. One evening, Lord Dunallan had fallen asleep, while Catharine, who stood behind his chair, supported his head on her bosom. Lord Dunallan's complaint prevented his sleeping but in a sitting posture; he now seemed to find his attitude an easy one, for his sleep was unusually calm and tranquil. Catharine became pale from fatigue, but refused to resign her place to Dunallan:

“I would not disturb him for the world,” whispered she to him, when he in the same tone of voice entreated her to resign her charge to him.

He stood near her in evident uneasiness.

“You will kill yourself, Catharine; I entreat you, suffer me. I shall not disturb your patient.”

“No, no, do not ask me. I am not fatigued.”

Dunallan remained near her, apparently miserable, till Lord Dunallan awoke; and after that evening, watched with such care, that he was always ready to support Lord Dunallan's drooping head, when it appeared that he was weary of his usual supports.

A thousand similar attentions, performed with the utmost gentleness and feeling, while, at the same time, an expression of deep sadness clouded his own countenance and manner, excited

feelings of gratitude and interest in Catharine which she could not repress, and which daily increased.

Dunallan also frequently conversed with Lord Dunallan on the subject of religion, which was the only one in which he now took any continued interest: and Catharine listened, with delighted attention, to his animated, and feeling, and convincing replies, to the cavilling arguments of her father. Dunallan went patiently over and over the same ground, giving a playful turn to the peevishness of sickness, and, with persevering earnestness, placing his subject in every varied point of view. His society became each moment more necessary to Lord Dunallan. Catharine, too, was now so constantly with her father, that Elizabeth, who found herself of no real use, at last consented to her entreaties to return to Mr. Melville, whose patience at her absence seemed wholly exhausted.

Catharine, however, almost regretted having suffered her friend to go, when, on the first day after her departure, she found herself alone with Dunallan. It was after dinner, and the servants had left the room. This was the only hour in the day in which Lord Dunallan chose to be left alone, so Catharine had no excuse for quitting Dunallan. He now himself appeared embarras-

sed, and for once at a loss for conversation. Catharine first broke silence.

“Do you think my father recovers at all, Mr. Dunallan?”

He hesitated, “What is your opinion, Catharine?”

“I cannot say that I think he does; but I am so apprehensive—perhaps you see differently.”

Dunallan seemed unwilling to answer her question.

“I am prepared to hear any opinion, Mr. Dunallan.”

“Your father himself has little hope of recovery, Catharine. Whatever is the event I think we ought to feel thankful for this, as it has the best of all effects. At your father’s age, few pleasures remain for us in this world. Ought we, Catharine, to wish, for our own sakes, to keep those we love here, when those years are come in which they say, ‘I have no pleasure in them?’”

“Oh, no,” replied Catharine; “if my father thought and felt on all subjects as you do, Mr. Dunallan, I could forget my own wishes; but”—she stopt, and sighed heavily.

“Your father, Catharine, when I was last here, was an avowed infidel. He now wishes to find that the Christian religion is true. If you re-

member what I wrote you were my own sentiments at one time of my life, you will feel that, of all men, I ought least to lose hope of others. He who taught me to differ, can in a moment impart to another a greater portion of that light which I have unworthily received."

Catharine was moved, for Dunallan spoke as if he deeply felt what he expressed. "You know always how to impart comfort at least, Mr. Dunallan," replied she with emotion; "and now that I have an opportunity, suffer me to express the gratitude which I confess almost oppresses me, for all your unwearied kindness to my father—your patience—your constant goodness." Her eyes filled with tears, and she rose and turned away to conceal them.

Dunallan followed her, "*Gratitude*^x again, Catharine! Why do you still use that expression to me? When we parted, before I went abroad, you allowed me to call myself your friend. You yourself invited me to assume the privileges of friendship. You allowed me to hope that you were pleased with my feeling the affection of a friend for you. I have never claimed more, yet you have treated me as a stranger, or rather as an exacting, unreasonable being, whom you dread to offend: for whose acts of common kindness you must feel an oppressive sense of gratitude.

What have I done to give you cause for all this, Catharine?"

Catharine was so astonished by this address as to be quite unable to answer a word.

"I detest all concealments," resumed Dunallan: "On my part there shall be none; and I will now acknowledge, that my letters, at least some of them, during my absence, I now regret having written. I do not ask you to remember the cause—the style of your letters—nothing should have made me for an instant forget how I ought to have acted towards you. Forgive me, Catharine, for having been led, even by you, into feelings of resentment, which towards you could only last till I again had an opportunity of seeing and feeling the perfect simplicity, the ingenuous openness of your character; the certainty, that when you were in error, it was the consequence of cruel delusion and self-deception; but I go too far, all I wish to say is, that I still feel for you all the friendship I did when we parted. Can you, Catharine, no longer regard me as you then did?"

"I can, Mr. Dunallan," answered Catharine, holding out her hand to him, "but I, too, hate all concealments; surely it was not I who first—do I quite understand you?" She blushed, and

proceeded, hesitatingly, "Was I deceived, did I deceive myself in thinking your letters were strangely changed in style before mine were?"

Dunallan shook his head; "Ah! Catharine," replied he, "do not attempt to say more; it will not succeed. I ask not for your confidence any farther till you choose to give it me. Let us say no more of the past. We shall only remember, that all is again between us as it was when we parted at Arnmore."

Catharine felt pleased but unsatisfied, and turned confusedly away from Dunallan's inquiring looks.

"Think no more now of what is past, dearest Catharine," said he, gently. "If at any future time you should feel disposed to treat me with more confidence, do not suffer yourself to be prevented by a consciousness of having erred, but remember how I attempted to win *your* confidence; and that though, for your own sake, I can never assist you to palliate any error, yet you know how trivial I must consider yours compared to my own. Forgive me, since I have ventured thus far, if, for once, I allude to another subject. You know, Catharine, that as a husband I deserve most deeply to suffer. In so far as I could do so alone, I should wish to bend in humble submission to a retribution I feel to be so just; but in some points it is impossible for me ultimately to

suffer alone; and now forgive me, dearest Catharine, for having been thus open with you, and let me no longer detain you from your father."

Dunallan seemed as if he wished to relieve Catharine from supposing herself obliged to give him any answer, and she was so utterly at a loss to comprehend what his last words meant, that she suffered him to lead her to her father's apartment, without attempting to say one word.

Lord Dunallan's emaciated countenance brightened with pleasure as they entered. "My Catharine," said he, "how that smile of yours chases away all my gloomy thoughts."

"Why were your thoughts gloomy, my dearest father?"

"Because the grave is a gloomy subject of thought, Catharine. But I will not banish the roses from your cheek by my gloom. Dunallan, we must find some amusement for my child here, since she will not seek it elsewhere."

"No, no, my dear father," said Catharine, with assumed cheerfulness, "it is your amusement we shall seek."

Lord Dunallan shook his head, with an expression of the most hopeless despondency.

"Perhaps, my dear Lord," said Dunallan, "Catharine may know some charm to take away

the gloom, even from the subject you mentioned.”

“ Oh, no, Dunallan ! to shut my eyes for ever on that sweet face, is the darkest ingredient of the gloom.”

“ But it is not for ever, my dearest father. It may be but a short separation, even should you go before your child.”

“ Ah ! my Catharine, it is easy with your youth and health to talk of death and the grave ; but, my child, when those roses are withered, and those luxuriant locks are thin and gray, and the grave seems near, and another state of existence really approaching, then, my child, a film seems to fall from the eyes ; all that we valued before appears in its true insignificance ; the vain trappings of a past day, and the state of the immortal spirit, that which before could scarcely fix a thought, then seems of an importance so vast, that the short time, failing nature tells us, we have to attend to it, seems so inadequate, that we shrink in despair from the task. I have often, my Catharine, repented of having consulted your inclination so little in the choice of your husband. I still blame myself for this ; but heaven has rewarded your obedience to an unreasonable father, by giving you a friend and protector, who will, before it is too late, lead you into the knowledge

of those important truths your father never taught you."

Catharine could not restrain her tears while her father spoke thus despondingly, and tenderly. She was seated close by him, and in silence pressed the hand she held to her heart. Dunallan had stood near them. He now sat down on the other side of Lord Dunallan, who immediately held out his hand to him.

"My dear Dunallan, this is sad melancholy work for you, to watch a wretched old man, dying in the blue devils."

"I do not consider dying such a melancholy work as you seem to do, my lord," replied Dunallan, in a cheerful, though serious tone of voice. "I have seen people die who would not have wished to live had it been in their power; young people, too, who had met with nothing to teach them the insignificance which your lordship has just said characterizes every pursuit, when viewed from the entrance into another state."

"I can easily conceive that of young people," replied Lord Dunallan. "They still believe the creed their mothers taught them; and, conscious of innocence, they look with certainty to those scenes of felicity they have been led to believe awaits them in an immortal state. But after having entertained infidel principles, and having run

the course of—Oh ! Dunallan, you do not know what a life I have led—I——”

“ I know, my Lord,” interrupted Dunallan, “ that in the eyes of the world your character has been as fair, or more so, than that of most other men, and therefore must regard your present view of it as a proof that the light of divine truth is rising on your mind, by which alone we can see what is requisite to satisfy the laws of God. You know, my lord, that it is my firm belief; no human being can be justified by his own merits in the sight of his Creator.”

“ But you always return to that canting mystery,” replied Lord Dunallan peevishly; “ who can comprehend your meaning when you talk of imputing the merits of another to rational and accountable creatures?”

“ I do return to that mystery, my lord, because I know of nothing else to turn to,” replied Dunallan, mildly. “ You say, my lord, that death is alarming to you, because you feel apprehensive that your life has not been so spent as to be found worthy at the great reckoning. I say that I believe no man’s has been so spent; and that we are lost for ever, unless at that day we have other grounds to rest our hopes of heaven upon, than our imperfect obedience,—I may say, our continued disobedience to the laws of God.”

Lord Dunallan continued for some time silent, and in deep thought, then said, "I have not been worse than other men. For many years I have lived free from every vice ; in youth, to be sure ; but few men can restrain their passions in youth : the Being who created us with those passions will excuse their excess. He is good and merciful."

Dunallan sighed deeply, "And would you rather, my Lord, trust that the Divine Being who has said, 'that no unbeliever, no impure person, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ;' would you rather trust to an idea for which there is no ground in Scripture, that his pity will lead him to break his word, than receive the forgiveness of your sins, and admission into heaven on his own terms?"

"And what are those terms?"

Catharine looked at Dunallan with admiring gratitude, when he began again, for perhaps the hundredth time, to answer this question. He did so with the utmost gentleness of voice and manner.

"The terms revealed to us in Scripture, my lord, are extremely simple, and, I think, completely suited to the state of your feelings. They are merely these.—'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' You have said, my lord, that you cannot believe. This state of

mind is also anticipated in Scripture; and we are told that ‘Faith is the gift of God;’ and again, ‘That we must ask and we shall receive. That God will not despise the humble and contrite heart. That He is the hearer of prayer.’ ”

“Dunallan, I *cannot* pray.”

“Could you listen to the prayers of another, my Lord?”

“Of a clergyman? certainly not—the whole neighbourhood would hear of it.”

“Not a clergyman’s then, my Lord, but your son’s.”

“Yours, Dunallan?” He seemed affected. Dunallan looked at Catharine. She smiled through the tears that had filled her eyes on Dunallan’s proposal, and immediately knelt down by her father. He laid his hand tenderly on her head for a moment, then covered his face, while Dunallan poured out his soul in fervent prayer to his Creator. He seemed to feel the exact state of Lord Dunallan’s mind, and entered into his dark and confused conceptions of religion, and suited his ardent and humble requests so completely to the wants of the immortal spirit, when, ignorant and apprehensive, it trembles on the brink of eternity, that Lord Dunallan’s enfeebled frame was scarcely able, while he listened, to support the emotions of his soul.

“Leave me,” said he, when Dunallan rose from his knees, “leave me, my Catharine, leave me alone, dear, excellent Dunallan.”

Catharine hesitated on seeing the perturbed expression of his countenance, but Dunallan took her hand, and gently drew her away.

“My dear Catharine,” said he, when they reached another apartment, “there are some feelings which cannot brook observation.”

Catharine remained silent, and continued, leaning on Dunallan’s arm, slowly to pace about the room. He too remained silent, and deeply thoughtful. “What an astonishing change the approach of death makes on every feeling and power of the soul!” said he at last. “How vividly it shows the true nature and value of things!”

“Yes,” replied Catharine; “I could wish its approach should always seem near for that cause. But, Mr. Dunallan, do you think the dread of its approach has the same effect on every mind?”

“No, my dear Catharine; I too well know, that it has not,” replied Dunallan, sighing, or rather almost groaning, as he spoke. “I have seen the approach of death have no other effect than that of increasing the desire of accomplishing earthly schemes; and the immortal spirit depart, satisfied with this, as if it had performed all its part. But what an awakening would be there!” Dunallan

shuddered, and clasped his hands together with alarming energy.

“ Ah !” said Catharine, “ if people only knew the rest the mind feels when it has discovered, even imperfectly, the end of its existence !”

“ Yes, Catharine, but mankind will not believe this, though assured of it by the wisest and the best. The ear will not, cannot hear, till it is unstopped—the eye cannot see—the heart cannot receive, till they are touched by a power from Heaven. How intense is their blindness, who see something to interest in every object and every inquiry under the sun, but in that which relates to the future existence of the soul ; and who yet boldly avow, that they discover proofs of immortality in their own minds—who will spend an existence in exploring into the minutest, and least valuable of the works of God, and be esteemed wise, while they turn with apathy from a Revelation which discloses to them the terms on which depends the happiness or misery of their immortal spirits during eternity. But, my dear Catharine, is it from your own experience, may I ask, that you have learnt to value so highly that rest of the mind which you described ?”

“ Yes,” replied Catharine, blushing ; “ but I only know what it is. I do not yet possess it always ; but knowing what it is, and where it is to

be found, prevents at least the possibility of believing, that the immortal part can be satisfied with what is not like itself, immortal. But, indeed, Mr. Dunallan, we must now return to my father."

"Do you fear that I shall ask you more questions about yourself, Catharine?"

"No—yes—I do not know why I should not like to answer you on this subject—but——"

"It is perfectly natural, my dear Catharine; but do not fear that I shall annoy you by my anxiety to know the state of your religious feelings and opinions—they cannot be concealed, Catharine—yet when you can, if ever that time shall come, trust me with this most precious part of your sentiments, you will find me very grateful."

They had now reached the door of Lord Dunallan's apartment. Catharine stopt and said, "I shall attempt to overcome my reserve, for my own sake, if you will promise to correct my errors."

"I promise to tell you frankly *my* opinion at least," replied Dunallan. They then entered Lord Dunallan's apartment. He was sitting with his head leaning on his hand. He raised it on their entrance, and smiling more placidly than Catharine had observed him do since her return, "Come, my dear young instructors," said he, "I now like your lessons.—Dunallan, how shall I thank you

for your patience with your old and stubborn pupil?—But, Catharine, my child—Dunallan—I feel very faint, assist me to the sofa.”

Catharine and Dunallan assisted him, and laid him gently as he wished, and Catharine held a cordial to his lips. He smiled as he received it from her; but some internal failure of nature checked his smile, and for an instant brought a livid paleness, and an expression of sudden and startling alarm over his countenance. But this was soon past, and he raised his eyes to heaven, full of such deep humility, and lowly tenderness of spirit, as almost to change the cast of his usually proud and stern features. Catharine looked at Dunallan; she saw he was alarmed. He left the room, and returned immediately with the medical gentleman, who was in constant attendance. Lord Dunallan had been subject to these faintish attacks during the whole of his illness, but now he seemed more than usually gone. The Doctor felt his pulse.

“ Mr. Crawford, you are too late,” said Lord Dunallan, faintly—“ I am gone.”

Mr. Crawford prescribed a restorative.

“ You have been right, Crawford,” said his Lordship—you told me the truth—I thank you—Fare you well—leave me now—I wish to say something to my daughter.”

Crawford left the room.

Lord Dunallan looked at Catharine, who hung over him in speechless terror. "My child, I was prepared for this. Crawford did not think I should have survived so long, but God has mercifully spared me until——" He stopt again, becoming very faint—attempted to speak, but suddenly starting, fell back into Dunallan's arms.

Catharine chafed his temples—his hands—used every means to recall him, but the spirit was gone for ever.

Dunallan assisted Catharine in all her attempts. Mr. Crawford also indulged every wish, which in her almost distracted state of feelings, seemed to promise a ray of hope, though he gently expressed his fear that every effort was vain.

Dunallan at last took her hand in his. "My dear Catharine, we expected this. How easily, how placidly has he left us! We ought not to wish it otherwise."

Dunallan's soothing and tender tone of voice gave the desired turn to Catharine's feelings. She burst into an agony of tears, and, disengaging herself from him, she clasped her arms around her father's insensible remains, and wept without restraint. Dunallan was much affected, and did not for some time attempt to check her natural emo-

tion. At last he again gently attempted to withdraw her from the scene.

“Remember, my dearest Catharine, who sends this affliction. We must believe that all His dispensations are dictated by His love, and attempt to prove our belief of this, and our gratitude, by resigning ourselves to His heavenly will.”

Catharine allowed him to lead her away a few steps, but then turned back. “I cannot leave him, Mr. Dunallan; let me see him carried to bed. Oh, my dear, my kindest father——” She would again have thrown herself upon the lifeless corpse, but Dunallan put his arm around her, and gently drew her away.

“Allow me, trust me, Catharine, to see all done as you wish.” He then led her reluctantly to her apartment. She entreated him to leave her, and return to the room they had left. Dunallan obeyed; and Catharine, when left alone, struggled to gain command of her thoughts and recollection, and, throwing herself on her knees, she attempted to raise her confused and agitated thoughts to heaven, and to implore resignation to the divine will. But her mind was unable to command itself. She continued on her knees, unconscious of the presence of Martin, who had followed and stood near her in silent grief. At last

some one knelt down beside her. She started and looked up. "Mr. Dunallan!" exclaimed she.

"Let us remain here, my Catharine; all is as you wish elsewhere. Let us together ask the support of Him, who 'Hath smitten and will heal you.'"

Catharine again bent down her head, and Dunallan, while he prayed, seemed to express the very inmost and undefined feelings of her heart. He expressed the most fervent gratitude for the light which had beamed on the departed spirit, before it had passed into its new and everlasting state of existence; and she then dared to trust that the light was real. She became collected and composed as he proceeded. He prayed for her, that she might now be enabled to rely on her Creator as her father; that she might believe, and comprehend the glorious privileges of such a relation, the perfection of His character, who graciously called himself the Father of the orphan, the perfection of his wisdom, his guidance, his power, his love, his tenderness; the happiness of those who trusted in Him, their security, their promise of light, and peace, and support in weakness. Dunallan's voice trembled as he prayed for Catharine, and he seemed obliged to stop, because unable to command his feelings.

When he had finished, he entreated her to re-

tire to rest. "To-morrow," said he, "I hope we shall be enabled to view this event with thankfulness."

Catharine could not speak. Dunallan again ejaculated a fervent entreaty for the presence of her heavenly Father, and then left her.

Catharine retired to bed, but not to sleep. She was, however, calm, and indulged in that tenderness of grief, which the recollection of the kindness and affection of her father inspired. Towards morning she fell asleep, and for a time forgot all her sorrows. But how painful is the waking after such repose! How bitter the first return to recollection, and to the reality of what has happened! Catharine felt all its misery. She did not leave her room that day till late in the evening. Dunallan met her with a calm seriousness of manner, which gradually restored that self-command which she had lost on again meeting him. His conversation, too, as it ever did, interested, and at the same time strengthened her mind, while his kindness soothed her heart.

CHAPTER VII.

A WEEK passed away. Dunallan seemed to have no object but Catharine in all he said and did. He led her to speak to him of her grief, and of all that was nearest her heart. Catharine unconsciously leant to him next to heaven for support and consolation.

Several more weeks elapsed; and again Catharine began to think of self, and of the future. She felt resigned to that will, which, in depriving her of her last parent, had gilded his dying moments with hope, and spared her witnessing any severe suffering. She felt thankful for having had one to console her in her grief, and to mourn with her, who had never for a moment ceased, in attempting to reconcile her to her loss, to lead her thoughts to the only true source of consolation and happiness—who had seemed to feel so deeply for her, that he had forgotten every other pursuit, every other object, to attend to her. She now recollected his extreme tenderness towards her for the week following her fa-

ther's death. She had then scarcely observed it; but now she remembered to contrast it with the greatly colder, though still kind and gentle manner he had more lately assumed. She still thought his coldness assumed; for she had remarked him check himself several times, and give a different turn to the tenderness of some expression he had just used. Yet, why should he wish to appear to feel more coldly towards her, than he really did? She had made no attempt to conceal her feelings from him; and those feelings had led her to impart to him almost every thought of her heart, and to meet him, after every interval of absence, with delight. It was on those occasions, she had observed, that he attempted to alter the meaning of the expressions of pleasure he used on first meeting her. Catharine in vain attempted to discover a cause for his wishing to repress his affection for her. She thought it would add to his happiness if he could love the woman to whom he was united for life. Her own happiness she now felt depended on him, as far as it could depend on any earthly being. At last she recollected what he had said about her letters—about delusion, and self-deception, and a gleam of light seemed to break upon her mind. “There must be some mystery about those letters,” thought she. She recollect-

ed his strange conduct on his first return to Arnmore after being abroad—his saying he would never ask an explanation from *her*—his having said more lately, that he detested concealments—that her letters were an excuse for the style of his—“Why should I not at least ask him?” thought she, “what there was in my letters that displeased him? This does not intrude into his confidence farther than he chooses. Why should I risk the possibility of lessening his happiness if an explanation would prevent it?” Yet she shrunk from the idea of asking this explanation. Perhaps it might produce nothing—perhaps it was only pity for her which had made him so tenderly kind. Her idea that he wished to conceal his feelings for her might be a mere fancy. She was called to meet Dunallan before she had come to any resolution. He was unusually grave, or rather sad, and met her without any apparent feeling of pleasure. She even thought there was a shade of displeasure, or rather disappointment, on his countenance. She forgot all her wishes about an explanation regarding herself, in the fear that something had happened to grieve Dunallan. It was now nearly two months since they had left Arnmore; and it struck her, that perhaps he might feel impatient to return thither,

but was too delicate to propose her yet leaving Dunallan Castle.

“I fear, Mr. Dunallan,” said she, “that your goodness to me has deterred you longer from returning to Arnmore than is perhaps convenient. I know you had reasons for hastening your return from abroad; I am ready to go back to Arnmore whenever you wish it.”

“I have no immediate wish to return to Arnmore, Catharine. I think we ought to finish our arrangements here before we return. Those papers and letters ought to be examined. Do you not agree with me in thinking that every, the minutest wish, expressed in a will, should be complied with?”

“I certainly do; but it pains me to think you should have the trouble.”

“Again!” interrupted Dunallan, “I must believe in time, Catharine, that you really wish to *pain me* by so repeatedly using such terms.” He seemed really displeased.

Catharine’s eyes filled with tears, “If I really could wish to pain you for a moment, Mr. Dunallan; if you can believe me capable of such ingratitude, surely nothing I can do is worthy of costing you the most trifling uneasiness.”

“Forgive me, Catharine,” said Dunallan,

much softened; "you would if you knew what at this moment almost unmans me."

Catharine looked alarmed.

"Do not be alarmed, dear Catharine," said Dunallan, "*you*, indeed, have no cause. I have only just received a letter from my miserable brother-in-law, Harcourt, informing me that he is in Britain, and in the most wretched circumstances."

"And does he make any unpleasant proposal about the children?" asked Catharine anxiously.

"No, none. He seems greatly changed. He has been compelled to leave India to escape his creditors. His worthless wife has abandoned him. He is now, in short, dear Catharine, in London—in the King's Bench—in wretched health—without friends—and without the means of existence; and he adds, 'with a conscience that is hell begun.'"

Catharine was shocked; but, after a moment's silence, "I think," said she, "if his conscience has been so dreadfully awakened by the wretched consequences of his past guilt, there may be better hope for the future."

"Certainly," replied Dunallan.

"Then why should you feel this intelligence so distressing?" asked Catharine anxiously. "If

Mr. Harcourt is truly changed, and truly wishes to reform, it will not be difficult to arrange worldly matters so as to make him tolerably comfortable. You know he is our brother," continued she gently; "the father of our sweet little girls. Ought we not to hope the best, and attempt every means in our power to lead him back to the right path, while bad health and an awakened conscience would assist our endeavours?"

"Most assuredly, dearest Catharine," replied Dunallan, "my duty is plain; but I confess that, at this time, I find it difficult to perform. I cannot help turning from, and wishing to avoid it. But you have confirmed the dictates of my own conscience, and I must hesitate no longer."

"I do not know the circumstances which makes this duty so painful to you; but," added she earnestly, "*you*, Mr. Dunallan, would I am sure, find it far more painful to be conscious of having neglected any duty. But forgive me," continued she, blushing deeply, "for presuming to preach to you."

"A thousand thanks, dear Catharine, for preaching to me. You preach truth; and," added he, sighing heavily as he spoke, "I must just submit, and again leave home."

"Leave home!" exclaimed Catharine, becoming as pale as death.

“Yes, Catharine, Harcourt entreats, implores me to go to him. How can I, indeed, be of any real use to him unless I do so?”

Catharine felt faint, and sick at heart, and leant back in her chair, unable to utter a word.

“Dearest Catharine,” said Dunallan eagerly, “you shall dictate to me in this matter. At this moment I regard it as my first duty to be guided by your wishes, whatever they are.”

“I have no wishes,” replied Catharine; and, bursting into tears, she disengaged herself from Dunallan, who would have detained her, and hurried to her own apartment. She there continued to weep and sob almost convulsively—so sudden and so overpowering was the idea that she was again so soon to be separated from Dunallan; now almost her only friend—and such a friend.

In a few minutes, Martin softly entered her room, and presented a note from Dunallan, then immediately retired.

“I have betrayed myself!” exclaimed Catharine bitterly. “How can he now avoid coming to an explanation?” She scarcely dared open his note.

“My dearest Catharine, shall I ever understand you? Need I say what that charm is which

makes it so difficult for me to tear myself from home, my present home ! Ask your own heart, Catharine, whether, if I knew all its secrets, I ought to say more ? Surely, thinking as you do, preaching as you so forcibly did to me within the last hour, you must feel that, on one subject, you would be more happy—more right, if you had no concealments with me. Yet, dearest Catharine, I only say this for your own sake. I do not urge you to give me your confidence on my own account ; I will only say, that the slightest explanation on your part—the mere acknowledgment that you know to what I allude, would be most gratefully received by me—would be all I should ever ask.

E. DUNALLAN.”

Catharine read this note once, and again, and again : “ What on earth can he mean ? ” thought she. Once more she read sentence by sentence.

“ Finds such difficulty in understanding me ! Impossible, Dunallan ! I am only too unguarded. If he knew all my secrets—what can he mean by this ? More happy, more right. I am only to acknowledge that I know to what he alludes.” In vain did Catharine attempt to find a meaning for Dunallan’s words. “ He seems to consider me guilty of something I ought to con-

fess to him," thought she; and her cheek glowed as she thought. "There is some strange mystery in all this. I will go, and at once ask an explanation." She rose and went towards the door, but stopt, "Why should *I* ask an explanation? If Dunallan has listened to any report against me—but it is impossible. Why should any one now wish to injure us in the opinion of each other?" She instantly recollected St. Clair, and light seemed to flash upon her; but terror came with it. Never, never, would she seek an explanation which might involve Dunallan in a quarrel with St. Clair. Such an event might have been the very aim of St. Clair. "But all this may only be a dream of my own imagination," thought she, after having conjured up every frightful idea which followed such a supposition. She then recollected what Dunallan had said regarding her letters to him, and she was again as much at a loss as ever. But time passed, and it was necessary, in some way, to answer Dunallan's note. After several changes, she at last, in despair of expressing herself more guardedly, and at the same time openly, wrote as follows:

"I scarcely know how to reply to you. Surely, Mr. Dunallan, if you believe me to be in

any error, you will not suffer me to continue so without pointing out to me what that error is. I am utterly unconscious of having any secrets—any concealments, with you, on any subject, which the strictest sense of friendship, or esteem, or *duty*, would forbid me to have. I cannot acknowledge that I know to what you allude, for I have in vain attempted to understand you. I can say no more. Allow me, however, to *write*, instead of *saying*, good night; for I confess my head aches violently, in consequence of what has passed during the last two hours.

C. DUNALLAN.”

Catharine sent her note to Dunallan, and then, for a time, listened to every sound, in the expectation of receiving an answer. None came, however. Martin at last appeared; but only with an inquiry on Dunallan's part.

“ Shall I tell Mr. Dunallan, Ma'am, that you are quite recovered? he seems so distressed and anxious.”

“ You may, Martin,” replied Catharine; “ though I am sure it is not true,” thought she as Martin left the room.

Catharine remained for the rest of the evening in her own apartment, in vain endeavouring to understand the meaning of Dunallan's conduct

towards her. She again attempted to recollect the contents of her letters to him during his absence, to which he had alluded in so strange a manner; but she could recollect nothing to account for any thing that had past. At length, after many and various unsatisfactory suppositions, she determined, that, before she was again separated from him, she should attempt to ask an explanation, at least with regard to those letters. To this separation, however, she looked forward with dread. Why did he never seem to think she could accompany him? But why, indeed, did he never do any thing she could understand, while his manner always conveyed an idea of the most perfect openness?

Next morning Catharine felt so conscious of having betrayed the state of her feelings to Dunallan, while his conduct and feelings towards her remained so inexplicable, that she dreaded again meeting him, and delayed it as long as she could, then entered the breakfast room, where he already was, with the greatest embarrassment of manner. Dunallan anxiously inquired for her health; but she received his inquiries with reserve and coldness, and his manner instantly became as cold and constrained as her own. He did not even allude to what had passed the evening before; and Catharine, though she had supposed

she wished that he might, now felt relieved when he did not, and again ventured to raise her eyes to him when she spoke. He looked grave, and she thought displeased, and immediately after breakfast proposed resuming the examination of Lord Dunallan's letters and papers. These were very numerous; and the cause of Lord Dunallan's wish that they should be carefully examined was, that, amongst them he believed there was a correspondence between him and a person now high in power, respecting the representation of the county; which he had left a written wish Dunallan should see, but which he had not so marked as to distinguish it from his other numerous letters and papers. There were other letters and papers which it was necessary to examine; and during this (occasionally very tiresome) occupation, Dunallan had found means to mingle conversation so successfully, that Catharine had got through her labours without fatigue. After being busily employed for some hours on this morning, Dunallan proposed walking out, to which she readily consented. It was now towards the end of March; the weather clear and invigorating, and nature beginning to wear the appearance of spring. Dunallan and Catharine seemed equally to feel its influence, and the coldness and reserve of both gradually passed away. Dunal-

lan was again as interesting in conversation as he always was, and Catharine as open and undisguised as if the note of the preceding evening had never been written. Many things, however, as they proceeded, recalled her father to Catharine's recollection, and mingled a feeling of deep sadness with the pleasure produced by the beauty and freshness of the objects around her. Dunallan seemed to guess what her thoughts were, and soon turned the conversation to subjects which led her to give expression to her thoughts, while his manner became as kind and gentle as ever.

“The day is so charming, I for a time forgot every thing else,” said Catharine; “but how seldom do we feel unmixed pleasure, even for a few moments. I have observed this so much, that now, whenever my heart feels light, I begin to look about for the grief I had forgot.”

“’Tis too true, Catharine; yet I believe it is best. Truth must be best; and there is no time on this side the grave in which we have not something either to mourn for or to dread.”

“But that is a very gloomy thought, Mr. Dunallan.”

“It appears so; but what happiness we may enjoy cannot consist, or rather ought not to consist, in delusion. Have your happiest moments,

Catharine, been those in which you were most gay?"

"Catharine thought for a little, "No, certainly. I have shed tears in my happiest moments, but they were tears of delight."

"Yes, Catharine; but delight which expresses itself by tears partakes of sadness. There will be no tears in heaven. And on earth, the most unmixed happiness is, I think, enjoyed in those moments when our hearts are most in unison with the inhabitants of heaven, that is, when they are so completely devoted to the Lord of heaven, as to love all his dispensations whatever they are."

There was an expression of elevation in Dunallan's countenance when he said this, and his eyes were raised to the cloudless sky above them with such fulness of devotion, that Catharine felt how completely he was speaking from his own feelings. She remained silent. Dunallan turned to her.

"Do you not agree with me, Catharine?"

"I see *you* know what that unmixed happiness is," replied she.

"I attempt to seek, Catharine; but at this moment I do not quite succeed. I cannot feel entire submission to that duty which will again make me a solitary traveller, uncertain whether

on my return I may not find you formal and respectful, and above all so insufferably grateful.”

Catharine wished to reply, but she was taken by surprise, and could not; and Dunallan, after a pause, began to talk on another subject.

On returning towards the house, Catharine observed that Dunallan's horses were in waiting for him.

“ You are going to ride, Mr. Dunallan.”

“ Yes. I am so impatient to hear how poor Harcourt is, and what is to be my own fate, that I am myself going to ride to the village for my letters.”

“ Do you recollect that the village is seven miles off?”

“ I do,” replied Dunallan; “ but I have still two hours before dinner. Adieu, dear Catharine,” and hurrying from her, he mounted his horse, kissed his hand several times, and was soon out of sight.

These two hours Catharine passed in painful anxiety, and in conjecturing what could be the cause of Dunallan's extreme unwillingness to leave her; for kind and gentle as he was, his conduct said most plainly that *regard* for her was not the cause. In vain she thought over every circumstance she could recollect that could throw light on the subject. At last she observed from

her window Dunallan rapidly approaching, and forgetting every thing in her impatience to know the result of his hurried ride, she flew down stairs to meet him. His looks on entering the hall confirmed all her fears. He seemed grave and sad, and disappointed. On seeing her, however, a smile of pleasure for a moment brightened his countenance.

“ I must go immediately, Catharine,” replied he to her anxious and inquiring looks. “ Poor Harcourt is very ill.”

“ *Immediately,*” repeated she, repressing as much as she could her regret and disappointment.

“ Immediately, dear Catharine. I have a letter from the physician who attends Harcourt. He thinks very ill of his case.”

Dunallan led Catharine into the nearest apartment, and gave her the letter he had just received. It was humanely and feelingly written, and concluded with these words:—“ I hope you will forgive my adding, that it seems carrying the punishment too far in the friends of this unfortunate young man so completely to abandon him, when he has not above a few weeks to live, to all the wretchedness, not only of his own guilty conscience, but to that also arising from the carelessness and neglect of those heartless

mercenaries who can alone be found in the wretched place he now inhabits."

"Ought I to resist that appeal, Catharine?" asked Dunallan, as she returned the letter to him.

"Certainly not," replied she, sighing deeply.

"I have been thinking, dear Catharine," resumed Dunallan, "that as your cousin Elizabeth cannot come to you, perhaps you might find pleasure in spending a short time with her while we are separated."

"I certainly should," replied Catharine.

"Well then, dear Catharine, if you will allow me to conduct you to her, I shall feel absence less painful when I know you are so happily situated."

"And how soon, Mr. Dunallan, must you go?"

"I cannot remain here after to-morrow, or if you could travel so early, my dearest Catharine, before breakfast, perhaps at seven o'clock the morning after."

Catharine's heart sunk on hearing that the dreaded separation was so near; and on attempting to reply, she burst into tears. She soon, however, succeeded in suppressing her emotion, which Dunallan now made no attempt to soothe or overcome, though his voice, when he again

addressed her, completely betrayed the softened state of his own feelings. He only spoke, however, of indifferent matters, such as finishing the examination of papers, and other arrangements.

The evening was devoted to these employments, and passed heavily away.

Part of next morning was spent in the same way; and when at last Dunallan informed Catharine, that every thing necessary was completed; though she felt relieved, she also felt as if, not only her separation from him was to be her next sad task, but as if in finishing all the arrangements directed by her father, she had now indeed put a close to all intercourse with him. She left Dunallan, and went to those apartments which had been her father's. She had spent many many hours since his death in those apartments, in resting her head on that couch where he had breathed his last, and indulging the melancholy which the remembrance of his kindness inspired. His books, his large chair, all remained just as he had left them. She now wept bitterly over those sad remembrancers. She again laid her head where she had last seen that of her dying father. She recalled his beloved countenance; his kindly affectionate looks; his smile of joy whenever she approached, and her tears flowed without control; yet her grief was mixed

with a feeling of tenderness and gratitude to heaven. The last expression of her father's countenance was still vividly impressed on her memory; and she dared indulge the hope that she would be led on in the strait and narrow way, till at the close of her pilgrimage, she might again meet this first known and beloved being who had entered before her on that new and untried existence to which she too was travelling. Oppressed and sad, Catharine remained indulging such ideas, which gradually tended to compose and elevate her feelings above all the passing pains, and attachments, and disappointments of a fleeting world, until hearing some one enter the antechamber in search of her, she at last forced herself away, locking the door of the apartment in which she had last seen her father, determined that henceforth it should be inhabited by no one but herself.

On meeting Dunallan at dinner, he seemed by the soothing tenderness of his manner, to guess how she had been employed, and soon by his conversation, in some degree, chased away the melancholy which had nearly overpowered her.

As the evening advanced, however, Dunallan himself became more and more grave; and one subject weighed so heavily on Catharine's mind, that it rendered her almost silent while she con-

tinued to revolve in her thoughts whether there could be any impropriety, any danger, any thing that could possibly wound or displease Dunallan in her indulging her wishes. This was in asking an explanation regarding her own letters to him during his former absence. At last, when the evening drew almost to a close, Dunallan, who had for some time also sunk into thoughtful silence, asked Catharine if he had her permission to write to her while away? There was something unusually cold and severe in the tone of Dunallan's voice when he asked this.

Catharine looked up; Dunallan's eyes were fixed upon her, while he waited for her answer; she hesitated and blushed deeply.

“You do not wish to write to me, Catharine?”

“Mr. Dunallan,” replied she, again blushing still more deeply, “may I ask an explanation of what you once said to me respecting my former letters to you? only, however, as far as regards myself. Do you remember to what I allude?” This question cost Catharine so much confusion, that she did not perceive the impression it made on Dunallan. She looked down, and waited for his reply to what she thought was perhaps an improper request, without daring to raise her eyes. His brightened with pleasure. He looked in delight for some moments at her now

pale and downcast and apprehensive countenance.

“ I do remember most perfectly to what you allude, dear Catharine.”

“ But surely you were mistaken, or there is something in what you said that I do not understand.”

“ Oh, no, Catharine, I could not be mistaken. I remember those letters too well; and it is only a few days ago, that in the hope I might have in some degree mistaken their meaning, I again read them. But you shall judge for yourself whether I have been mistaken. I shall return them to you to dispose of as you choose. If you can say, dearest Catharine, after you have read them, that your heart now feels they were too cold, too regardless of what I should feel on receiving them, I shall ask no more.” He then left the room, and returning in a few minutes, presented a packet to Catharine.

“ I beg you will read those letters according to their dates,” said he, “ you will then perhaps remember to which of mine they were answers.”

Catharine promised to do as Dunallan wished, and then taking leave for the night, hastened with her packet to her own apartment, wondering what Dunallan could have expected her to write, as she recollected that her only dread had

been, on recalling the style of her letters to him, that of having too plainly indulged the feelings of the moment in some expressions.

She opened the first letter in the packet, but it seemed so short she could not believe it was that she had written in reply to Dunallan's long letter, in which he had so generously confided to her all the most private feelings and events of his life. But on examining dates, she found it was the first she could have written to him after his leaving England.

She began to read; but as she proceeded, started with astonishment at the style. She looked at the address—the séal—the hand—all were her own. She again began to read; but before she had finished the half of the first page, she was convinced that the letter was not hers, and that some treachery had been employed to destroy the happiness of Dunallan and herself. She had gathered up the letters, and was returning to inform Dunallan of her suspicions, when she was struck with the apparent improbability of such a story. Would Dunallan believe that any one could thus exactly imitate her hand, that any one would dare to open letters addressed to him, and change their meaning?

She again sat down in despair. There was one being in the world, who she knew could

write her hand exactly, and every hand he chose to imitate. It had been his boyish pastime and delight. This was St. Clair; and she instantly felt certain that he was the author of all her late unhappiness from Dunallan's unaccountable conduct. She recollected the dark expression of his countenance the last morning she had seen him, and her suspicions were confirmed. But she also recollected the pride and violence of his character, and again shuddered at the idea of Dunallan's attempting to seek from him any explanation on such a subject. Yet she feared that she could thus only clear herself to Dunallan. She soon, however, determined *never* to clear herself at such a risk, and began again to read the letter Dunallan had so long believed to be her answer to his kind and open avowal of all his errors, and his warm and feeling expressions of interest in herself. She felt sick at heart as she proceeded.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I received your very long letter, dated a few days ago. I ought, and do thank you for this new proof of confidence in me, and hope I shall still act so as to deserve it. The account you give of the death of your friend Mr. Churchill affected me much, and I sincerely pity you for

having lost such a friend. Allow me again to repeat my grateful thanks to you for the interest you express in my happiness. Mrs. Oswald is very kind and attentive to me; and I still endeavour to find pleasure in those occupations you pointed out to me as most useful to you in your absence, and most beneficial to me. I hope when you return I shall be so happy as to meet with your approbation. My father is still at Dunallan Castle, and is to remain there for some months. I do not mean to leave Arnmore, and I hope this determination will satisfy you. I still only wish to know your desires; and whatever mine might have been, I shall now leave no means untried to teach myself to feel,

Your affectionate and dutiful

C. DUNALLAN."

Catharine clasped her hands, and raised her imploring eyes to heaven, when she had finished this cold and trifling letter, with its meanly cruel conclusion.

"What shall I do? Can I leave Dunallan in the belief that I could write such an answer to his letter? Kind, forgiving Dunallan!" She burst into tears. "No, no, he must be undeceived. But how can I undeceive him? That vile St. Clair, who could stoop to such villany,

what might he not do in revenge, if he knew that I had detected and betrayed his vileness." She read the other letters,—they were colder, and still more repining. "What can I do?" exclaimed she aloud; and starting up, she again determined to go to Dunallan, and assure him she had never written the letters he had given her. But she again stopt in despair. Dunallan's danger from the hatred of St. Clair, should he make inquiries, and discover what she believed to be the truth, rushed into her mind, and overcame every other feeling, even the desire to vindicate herself. She again sat down in deep and painful thought, but soon had recourse to her ever-powerful refuge in difficulty. She threw herself upon her knees, nor did she rise from them till she felt able and willing to leave the event in the hands of the all-wise, and all-powerful, and all-good disposer of every circumstance in her life. She then retired to calm, and undisturbed, and peaceful rest, feeling sweetly and confidently sure that she and Dunallan were safe under "the shadow of the wings of the Almighty."

Early next morning she awoke in the same exalted state of feeling. The carriage was already at the door, and preparations making for the journey before her. She had determined what she should do before she quitted her room. Dunal-

lan was in the hall to meet her, and she received him with composed, though downcast looks.

“ I fear I am making you travel too early, Catharine.”

“ No indeed. Have I detained you ?”

“ Not at all ; but I must now hurry you away.”

She gave him her hand. After following her into the carriage, he still detained it in his ; and the door was scarcely closed upon them when he turned to her.

“ Catharine, I must ask what your opinion of your letters now is. Forgive my impatience ; but do they not plead my excuse with you, for any appearance of chagrin or disappointment in mine ?”

“ Mr. Dunallan,” replied Catharine solemnly, and turning to him as she spoke, “ I never wrote those letters ; they are not mine.”

Dunallan looked at her in astonishment. “ Not yours, Catharine !”

“ I see you do not believe me,” said she, turning away, and bursting into tears. “ Indeed, how is it possible you should ?”

“ Dearest Catharine, you can say nothing I will not believe ; but what did you say ? Did I understand you ? Were those letters not written by you ?”

“ No, never. Could you believe I had written such a letter as that one, in reply to your generous confidence, and not have detested me ?”

Dunallan was silent for a few moments.

“ Catharine,” said he at last energetically, “ I will then leave nothing unexplained. The cold formality of your letters to me did indeed pain me more than I can easily tell you ; but another letter fell into my hands, which excited feelings I hope you will never be able to conceive ; and which I confess were the cause of my sudden return home. I have this letter with me ; indeed it is always with me, because I did not wish to destroy it, yet dreaded its falling into any hands but those who would have delivered it to you. I once said I should never ask an explanation from you,—I meant respecting this letter, which I thought you must have guessed had fallen into my hands ; but now—perhaps—”

“ I entreat you let me explain every thing regarding myself,” said Catharine earnestly.

Dunallan then produced a letter, from which he tore the envelope, and presented it to her. He then turned away, and seemed busily engaged in looking at the objects seen from the carriage window.

Catharine trembled as she opened this letter. The address was written in her hand ; but be-

neath it was added, in Dunallan's writing, "Addressed by mistake to me;" and on another part of the letter, "To be given unopened to Mrs. Dunallan, in the event of my death. E. DUNALLAN." Catharine began to read; but after the first few words, could scarcely proceed. She however persevered.

"You have convinced me, my dear friend, that there is nothing really wrong in my corresponding with you, since, as you say, it is only the expression of soul. I shall again, therefore, indulge in that pleasure. I do not disavow the misery I feel when I reflect on the tie which binds me for ever to a being so singular,—so unlike whatever could inspire affection in me. Yet, my friend, he is good and gentle to me, and I really wish to feel for him, at least gratitude. I know not what has taken him abroad, but I believe his motive is good. You ask me, if I write frequently to Mr. Dunallan? I do; and you would pity me on the days I have to fulfil this task. Yet I am wrong, and blame myself for not feeling more kindness towards him. Indeed, before he left me, his mildness and goodness had so far won upon me, that I at least felt benevolence—or I do not know what. But adieu to this painful subject; only I entreat that in your letters you never mention him but with respect. You will pain me if you do

otherwise. I admire your definition of the word friendship:—‘That kind of love which will not be changed by death. The passion of the soul.’ You ask me, do I feel this for you, my friend? If I understand you, I do. Oh how cheerfully would I lay down my life, and all that it now promises, to meet you and one other friend in another state—you, and my Elizabeth. But this is not allowed us. We must live apart; we must disguise the feelings of our hearts, and pretend to love where we are indifferent; and to be indifferent where we love, till the few short years of our painful existence terminate. I think, my friend, you will scarcely recognise your gay and playful tormentor, as you used to call me; but writing to you recalls every idea of lost happiness.—Adieu, friend of my soul.

Yours,

CATHARINE DUNALLAN.”

Catharine’s cheek glowed with shame and indignation, while she with difficulty got through this letter. She had unconsciously turned away from Dunallan, as much as she possibly could, while reading it; and when she came to its conclusion, she was so overwhelmed she could neither speak nor raise her eyes. “How could Dunallan forgive this?” thought she. “How could

he even bear me in his sight? Vile! cruel St. Clair! Forgiving, generous, noble Dunallan!"

"My dear Catharine," said Dunallan, "can you forgive my showing you that letter? I have done so that you might understand my past conduct, and in the hope that you would pardon it. I hastened home, because I thought the person who had written the letter to which I supposed that was the answer, could not be a safe friend,—because I knew you were too ignorant of the world, dearest Catharine, to know the danger of such friendship."

"And did you believe I had written that letter? Oh! Mr. Dunallan, could you believe I had written such a letter after the vows I had made, and still feel the kindness of a friend for one capable of such——"

"I could have loved you as a brother, Catharine, whatever you had done," interrupted Dunallan. "How have I struggled to overcome a far stronger feeling than that of a brother for you! What a load have you removed from my heart, Catharine—from my conscience!" He looked up to heaven with an expression of the deepest gratitude. His eyes were softened almost to tears.

"Dearest Catharine, dearest of human beings, can I at this moment ask more? Yet you have

mentioned those vows which I promised I should never recall to your recollection; must I still keep that promise?"

"Yes, Mr. Dunallan, I wish you still to regard me as your sister until——"

"Until when? dearest Catharine."

"Until I can convince you that I never did write those odious letters."

"I am convinced you never did, Catharine, completely convinced. Your character, which was the most painful enigma to me, while I feared you had written them—at least the last, is now all consistency—all ingenuousness. I have, I am now sure, been right in the way I have read its various feelings ever since I knew you,—and that blush and smile, too, Catharine."

"Oh! do not, I entreat you, attempt to read so exactly!" exclaimed Catharine, blushing still more deeply.

"Why, Catharine," asked Dunallan, looking smilingly at her blushing countenance, "may I not at least ask if I am right in the conclusion I would now form, from all I have read?"

"I do not know—I believe not—I dare say you are mistaken."

Dunallan took her hand in his. "Oh no, my Catharine, I am not mistaken. You are too artless,—your sweet looks are too true to your heart

for any one to mistake you. Those very letters could not overcome the influence of that artlessness. Why, Catharine, do you wish to keep me miserable? Am I now mistaken in thinking that what would make me happy—happier than I have words to express—the certainty that there was no thought, or wish, or feeling, in either of our hearts unknown, unshared by the other, would also add to your happiness? Am I wrong in believing that it is an idea of my still possibly feeling some uncertainty respecting those letters which prevents you, at this moment, from being perfectly frank with me? I shall, the moment I arrive in London, attempt to clear up this strange mystery. I suspect I know who is the author of these cruel mistakes, but——”

“For heaven’s sake,” interrupted Catharine, with terror in her looks, “make no inquiry,—do nothing about those letters. You do not know the violence—the mad rashness of St. Clair’s character. Oh! if you do not wish to make me miserable, promise me you will do nothing in this affair!”

Dunallan smiled. “I did not name Mr. St. Clair, Catharine.”

Catharine looked thunderstruck at her own imprudence.

“ I see, Catharine, our suspicions have fallen on the same person, however,” resumed Dunallan, “ and I think probably with justice. I now remember his wonderful facility in imitating writing, particularly yours, Catharine. Oh ! had this recollection come sooner ! But surely, my sweet, my Christian friend, you do not think I would so forget my duty to Heaven, as to seek this explanation in any way that would endanger the safety of either ?”

“ No, indeed. But, Dunallan, you do not know St. Clair. Oh ! if you have any value for my peace, promise me that you will not attempt to see him,” added she, the tears starting into her imploring eyes.

Dunallan seemed rather surprised. “ Your peace is very dear to me, Catharine. I shall make any promise you wish, to assure you of this.”

Catharine’s face glowed. She did not quite understand the meaning of Dunallan’s words and looks ; and, taking his hand in both of hers, “ You are right, Dunallan,” said she, “ in thinking, that if every thought and feeling of my heart were known to you, I should be happier, for you can read it wrong.”

“ Why, then, Catharine, lead me to read it wrong ? Why sometimes make me believe you

could be happy with me, and then say what leads me to fear there is some unknown objection—some unwillingness you cannot overcome? If there is, tell me, my Catharine,—if there is any imprudent friendship, any misplaced confidence, any thing that it might afterwards pain me to know; or tell me only that there exists some thing you do not wish imparted to me, I shall ask no further.”

“ There is nothing I do not wish to impart to you, Dunallan. All I wish is this, that you would not make inquiries respecting those letters, because, for your sake, I fear the revengeful violence of St. Clair’s character; and because I do not believe his pride would ever suffer him to acknowledge to you that he had been guilty of such dishonourable conduct; and because,” added she, looking at Dunallan as she spoke, “ I should greatly dislike the idea of disgracing all the St. Clairs, were such a discovery made by legal means. Yet until I can prove to you that I never did write those letters, I cannot feel quite worthy of your confidence; and, until I do, I cannot wish to remember my vows.”

“ But, Catharine, if you cannot be satisfied unless the mystery regarding those letters is cleared away, and yet will not suffer me to make any inquiries respecting them, what is to be done?”

“ I shall myself attempt to come at an explanation.”

“ But if you do not succeed, dear Catharine, which is most probable.”

“ Why, then, I must just try to *prove* to you that it was *impossible* I should ever have written them.”

“ I am convinced of that already, Catharine.”

“ Well, if you will promise me not to seek, by *any* means, a meeting with St. Clair on *any* subject, I shall, on your return, if I cannot find means to convince you otherwise, and more satisfactorily, attempt to do so by being very obedient, and dutiful, and so forth,” said she quickly, and turning away as she spoke.

“ And with your whole heart, Catharine, even if there had been no vows?”

“ With my whole heart, Dunallan.”

“ Then, my own Catharine, let us now really take those vows which one of us at least could not take before.” He then raised her hand in his to heaven, and implored that blessing, without which they could enjoy no real happiness, though all besides should smile upon them. He prayed for himself,—that the sweetest of all gifts might not wean his heart from the Giver; for both, that they might remember they were but strangers and pilgrims on earth, and that their dearest comforts

would become injurious to their best and everlasting interests, if they led them to forget that better country, where alone there was perfect goodness or perfect happiness.

Catharine felt sweetly assured, by Dunallan's appeal to heaven for every blessing; and—but it would take volumes to tell all that was said, and remembered, and explained, in the first perfect confidence of the following hours. Besides, happiness *will* not describe, for no description satisfies hope, and to experience, every description seems extravagant. As the day passed, however, and the time of separation approached, the bitter ingredients which mingle with every earthly enjoyment began to depress the feelings of the travellers. Still, however, duty said,—humanity said, that Dunallan must proceed, and arrangements could not be altered; he ought not to delay till Catharine could accompany him. He, however, at length received Catharine's promise, that if on meeting Harcourt, he should find that he had any wish to see his children, a wish he had not yet expressed, she would accompany Mrs. Oswald and them, and meet Dunallan in London. This promise, for a time, dispelled the gathering gloom, and again restored a degree of cheerfulness to their conversation.

“ And so you think you have read all my

thoughts ever since that dreadful day you arrived *so willingly* at Dunallan Castle," said Catharine, playfully. "I suspect you must be mistaken, or surely you have an affection for some very great faults."

"Shall I tell you what I read, my Catharine?"

She smiled. "Will you not be very unmerciful?"

"Not more so, I promise, than you long were to me."

"Oh! I believe I will not trust you; for people who are given to that kind of reading often make mistakes."

"Perhaps they may; but I shall appeal to yourself whether I do."

"Oh! no, no," replied she; but Dunallan smilingly proceeded, "When I first came to Dunallan Castle, I was much prejudiced against you, Catharine, and on one point, very near my heart, that of religion, I knew, for I had made most particular inquiry, that we probably should not have one idea in common."

"Catharine began to listen without opposition."

"Well," proceeded Dunallan, "I did arrive with a very heavy heart, and most melancholy anticipations for the future. I shall not say how much these were done away by the first im-

pression your appearance made upon me. You had been represented to me as haughty and unfeminine in manner. I remembered that you had been so in some degree in your childhood; but I then saw you struggling, as you approached, against feelings which, however, overcame you, and gave to your appearance the most feminine softness. You afterwards did assume looks of haughtiness and contempt; and when I found you seated in the drawing-room with several old ladies *standing* around you, while you, regardless of every one else, listless, and careless, reclined in your chair, and received the incense of obsequious admirers, who made court to you by flattering your faults, I felt that my first pleasing impression was taking flight. When, however, the deep blush and look of consciousness followed your observance of the disapproving countenance of even an unwelcome and not esteemed stranger, I was convinced you had a mind, which, though it might be injured by prosperity and adulation, was still alive to the best impressions. Your obvious determination, immediately afterwards to show me that you did not mean to change your conduct one hairbreadth in consequence of my observations, seemed to me so perfectly natural in your circumstances, that I found it rather engaging to me, and then your generous feeling of pity on

that evening, when my persecutor, St. Clair, attempted to wound me in the tenderest part; in short, on the first day I saw you, I had read so far that I had found you at least an object of very great interest to me. Every day afterwards increased that interest. I saw you were proud, at least in one sense. You had little respect for the opinions of others; and with your uniform openness showed the utmost indifference, or even contempt for those around you, at least most of them; but at the same time you really did not think highly of yourself. You were often even humble in that respect, and always sincere. I soon saw you were strongly prejudiced against me, and that several of those around you endeavoured to increase that prejudice, yet you generally were just and candid, even to me; and I saw with delight, when I expressed sentiments or opinions different from yours, and from others who sought to please you, by agreeing with you, that where mine were really more just and right, you almost always, before we left the subject, became of my opinion. This interested me very warmly in you, and gave me an ardent desire to use every means to lead you to judge and think for yourself. This interest in you, my dearest Catharine, I believe defeated its own object. I

went too far, and you shrunk from my harshness."

"Ah, I remember the time to which you allude," said Catharine, "and how justly you blamed me. I felt then that you were just, but I thought you severe."

"I was unpardonably harsh: but I suffered for it. You were then, Catharine, become very dear to me, and I deeply regretted having done any thing to deprive myself of the little favour you sometimes before that had showed me. But, Catharine," asked Dunallan, "do you remember what followed?"

Catharine thought for a little, and soon recollected the pleasure she had then felt on perceiving the power she had acquired over Dunallan's happiness. She blushed, "I do, Dunallan, and I believe you read justly on that occasion."

"Ah, Catharine, that was the first time my penetration gave me any hope, at least transient hope. I saw that you had no objection to feel your power over me. I determined, however, not to submit to being purposely tormented even by you, and I saw you understood me. I used every endeavour I could at that time to induce your father to delay our union. I hoped, perhaps, to gain a place in your esteem, for by that time I really would have felt it a painful sacrifice

to duty had I succeeded in my endeavours to put a final stop to our marriage. Had I succeeded I must have fled from you."

"Why?" asked Catharine.

"Because, my dearest Catharine, you did not then feel on the subject of religion as you now do."

"But I should have had the same means to lead me to those feelings, the same instructions, the same example."

"Yes, my Catharine, but a Christian must not venture to calculate on the success of means unless he is confident that he is in the path of duty. Success does not depend on him, and he cannot hope for it when he has left the path of duty and preferred the indulgence of his earthly affections to the plainest interests of his immortal soul; and chosen to place nearest his heart, and to give the most constant influence over his conduct, and over his affections, and in his family, to one who yet neither knows, nor loves, nor serves his Master. I should have had no hesitation on this subject. I too well knew how deceitful my own heart was to listen to its arguments on such a matter; and till the day on which I found I could no longer avoid fulfilling my promise to my father, I sincerely did all in my power, both for your sake and my own, to prevent, if possible, the fulfilment of a promise I had sinned in making, and would

probably be led into continual temptation by fulfilling. But to return—after the day for our marriage was fixed, I saw my hopes of gaining your affection were at an end. You felt yourself a sacrifice, and naturally regarded me with dread and aversion. You then really detested me. I then wrote those letters I before mentioned to you. I would have done any thing to restore you to peace; but while I watched continually for the possibility of assuring you that I would, you as carefully avoided me. You would not even look at me, or if you did, the expression of your countenance said, ‘Most hated and mistaken being, though I sacrifice myself to my father’s wishes, do not flatter yourself that one feeling of mine agrees with those wishes.’”

“Oh, you have read *very, very* well,” said Catharine, laughing. “And now, pray, what did my face say after that dreaded day was half over?”

“Why,” replied Dunallan, “its language was very pleasing to me. It said, ‘Is this the man I thought so hateful,—this quiet, not very selfish, at least good sort of a harmless creature?’”

“Oh, no, no,” interrupted Catharine, still laughing.

“What then?” asked Dunallan laughing also.

“Oh, it was you who were reading. I did not promise to put you right; but now that you have

shown me you can be wrong, I think you must go no further."

"Then, my Catharine, shall I tell you what I suffered when I could no longer think you the ingenious, artless being I had supposed, so easily understood, so sweetly undisguised? No, I will not. You can easily guess how dreadful the idea must have been to me, that I had been the means of forcing you into a situation where you were tempted to deceive both me and yourself. That I had not only made you unhappy, but exposed you to all the danger to be dreaded from the plausible sophistry of an insidious destroyer, aided by your own disappointed affections. But I will not cloud this happy day by recalling such dreadful ideas, such, to me, most just, but agonizing retribution."

The day, however, could not long remain unclouded. As the hour drew nearer at which they must separate, Catharine became every instant more sad, and Dunallan also seemed overpowered: but it was absolutely necessary he should proceed to London, and he had left himself so little time, that it was now impossible Catharine could accompany him. At last they turned into a road from whence was seen, within a short distance, Edinburgh and its surrounding hills.

"You will not forget to think of me, then, at

those hours we have agreed upon, my Catharine?" said Dunallan.

"Forget, Dunallan!" she burst into tears.

Dunallan struggled to overcome his own softness. "We shall, I trust, my love, meet again in less than a fortnight. We know in whom we trust. When we feel the loneliness and emptiness of heart which separation brings, let us remember He is present with us both. This thought will unite us at least in soul." Dunallan continued attempting to support Catharine's drooping spirits, until at last they entered the town, and almost the next minute, the square in which Mrs. Melville resided.

"My Catharine, may God bless and be ever near you."

Catharine clasped his hand in both of hers. "You will remember your promise, Dunallan; you will seek no explanation; you will not see that wicked St. Clair."

"I will not, my love, seek to meet him. I do not wish to see him. I need no explanation. You will write very soon, my Catharine, very frequently."

"Oh yes; and you too, Dunallan."

The carriage stopt.

"God bless you, my beloved Catharine. Farewell."

“Farewell, my dear Dunallan.”

The door of Mrs. Melville's house was open, and she herself stood on the steps. Dunallan handed, or rather lifted Catharine out.

“Catharine must make my excuse to you, my dear Mrs. Melville,” said he; again pressed Catharine's hand in his—hurried into the carriage, and was soon out of sight.

Catharine's heart sunk. She suffered Mrs. Melville to lead her into the house, but her thoughts still followed Dunallan.

Elizabeth looked in her expressive countenance, and said, smiling, “Poor friendship! how it must yield to mighty——, what shall I call it, Catharine?”

Catharine threw her arms around her friend. “What you please, my own Elizabeth, veneration, esteem!”

“But not love,” whispered Elizabeth.

“Are you jealous, my Elizabeth?”

“No, my dear Catharine; I wish from my soul your present feelings may increase. I believe Mr. Dunallan deserves the warmest affection you can bestow.”

“He does indeed, Elizabeth. I have discovered this, after yielding to every prejudice against him till it was no longer possible. You, Elizabeth, were always more just.”

Sad recollections soon began to crowd on Catharine's memory. She had not before seen Elizabeth since her father's death; and all its mournful circumstances, with the remembrance of his affection for her friend, formed the subject of a long and interesting conversation. Mr. Melville was on that day engaged out, for which he had requested his wife to apologize to Catharine, saying, at the same time, that he believed he would not be regretted, but only saved the pain of finding himself an intruder even with his wife. Catharine felt relieved on hearing she should only see Elizabeth for some hours.

“ I have much to learn from you, dearest Catharine,” said Elizabeth, after she had made every inquiry respecting the last moments of her beloved uncle, and wept with Catharine over the mournful account. “ When I left you last, Catharine, I was afraid of saying a word when you and Mr. Dunallan were both present, lest I should annoy either of you, and somehow you never were asunder: yet both so much on the alarm; Mr. Dunallan so cold and formally polite in his manner, while his expressive, and then melancholy countenance, told the real state of his feelings; and you, Catharine, so gentle, so submissive, so lowly in your manner to him, so anxious to oblige; in short, so completely the reverse of

what you had been when I had formerly seen you together. Then every turn of your countenance expressed the most marked dislike, or even scorn."

"Oh, Elizabeth, how foolish was I then; how blind! Had you only seen my heart on the evening of that dreaded day on which we parted, my marriage day. I dare say no human being's feelings were ever so suddenly, so completely changed. On that evening, when I saw him received by his own family with such unbounded joy: when I saw how he was loved by all of them; when he read and prayed so impressively! Oh! I shall never forget my feelings then."

"And now, Catharine, you have come on the very subject I wish most particularly to converse with you upon," said Elizabeth, drawing her chair, and putting her face closer to Catharine's, "I did not wish to lead your mind to any thing so gloomy when I last saw you; but have you really, my dear friend, adopted Mr. Dunallan's religious opinions?"

"I have to ask you too, Elizabeth," replied Catharine, smiling, "why you have so studiously avoided answering those parts of my letters in which I attempted to lead you into this subject?"

"Because," replied Elizabeth, "I confess it

grieved me to see that your mind had been so soon, so easily perverted; yet you know I do not like to write such strong and plain things. I determined never to enter on the subject with you on paper, because I know there is great pleasure in discovering arguments in favour of opinions held by those we love. I trusted a little to the influence I might have in conversation, when I could see your feelings, but not in the least to any I should have by writing."

"Well, Elizabeth, I am ready to meet you in conversation, though I do not think your excuse a very good one, for neglecting what I assure you cost me a great deal of trouble and thought to write, just because I feared you might disagree with me."

"And I certainly do, my dear Catharine. Could any one have a greater contempt for those opinions than you yourself had, my dearest friend, before you so completely changed your feelings towards Mr. Dunallan?"

"Because, my Elizabeth, I condemned them in perfect ignorance of what they were. I allow your inference, however. It certainly was my esteem for Mr. Dunallan that first led me to think more favourably of his opinions. But I have now learnt that those opinions must be loved for their own sakes, or they have neither

value nor influence on those who adopt them. But what, my Elizabeth, is so disliked by you in my religious sentiments?"

"For one thing, dear Catharine, those who adopt them become so ridiculously singular. I shall just give you an instance. I was at a party last Saturday evening, where there were many young people, and amongst them one young man of rank, who, I was informed, was a saint. I at the same time was told he was very stupid. His countenance, I thought, however, was both pleasing and intelligent; and I felt inclined to judge favourably of him. I happened to be near him in a crowded part of the room, when, by appealing to his watch, which he had been stealing several looks at before, he discovered that it was twelve o'clock. He immediately took leave of the party with whom he had been, and who, notwithstanding his stupidity and saintship, I must allow, seemed very anxious to detain him. 'Pray, my lord, do not go yet,' was echoed from the whole party; and the mother of two of the young ladies said in her most winning voice and manner, that he really must oblige her by remaining half an hour longer, unless he had some other and more agreeable engagement. He became very confused, and blushing up to the ears, stammered out, 'I find

that it is now Sunday morning, Madam ; I do not think I am properly employed for that day, and must therefore entreat you to excuse me.’”

“ Good young man !” exclaimed Catharine, her eyes glistening.

“ My dear Catharine, is it possible you can admire such a parade of religion ?”

“ I do not admire parade, Elizabeth ; and I think it would have been better, perhaps, had your young saint left the party sooner, and have avoided this explanation. Yet I think that what you regard as parade, was probably a species of martyrdom to him, which he forced himself to undergo rather than shrink from avowing his principles, rather than deny what master he served.”

“ Oh, Catharine, how can you defend such absurdity ? What harm could there have been in conversing another half hour even on Sunday ?”

“ I think I can discover harm in having such late parties on Saturday night, my dear Elizabeth ; and therefore equal harm in attending them. You are kept late up yourself, and consequently must be late next morning, perhaps too late to go to church in the early part of the day. Your servants must be late ; besides that they at least must break the plain commandments of heaven, for they must necessarily do a great

deal of work on Sunday which they ought not to be obliged to do: and indeed, I think the spirit of the commandment at least is broken through also; for can any one return from a gay party late on Saturday, or rather early on Sunday, in a right state of mind for keeping the sacred day holy? I am sure I could not."

"But this is the very thing, Catharine. You get such gloomy dismal notions about every thing. Sunday was surely intended for a day of rest and happiness, not of melancholy deprivations. I should like to know how you spent your Sunday at Arnmore. I suppose Mrs. Oswald would insist on every thing going on exactly as when Mr. Dunallan was at home."

"At least I did," replied Catharine, smiling, "for Mrs. Oswald would take the lead in nothing."

"You, my Catharine! you would be sadly at a loss."

"Mrs. Oswald willingly assisted me, and told me exactly what had been Mr. Dunallan's wishes and her own."

"Well, dear Catharine?"

"Well, Elizabeth, I dare say you will think we were very gloomy. Our hours at Arnmore are always early. On Sunday we were called half an hour earlier than usual, because the pa-

rish church is rather distant. We met on that day at eight o'clock to prayers. The servants were ordered to have every thing done on Saturday, to prevent any unnecessary work on Sunday; and all were ordered to assemble, ready dressed, for church, when we met at prayers. This served two purposes; it prevented much time being spent in dressing, and any improper finery, at least in some degree. After prayers and breakfast, it was time for the servants who walked, to set out for church, which they every one did except an old woman, who could not walk so far; and those few servants who were absolutely necessary, returned home after the morning church, and this they did by turns. Mrs. Oswald, the children, and I, and sometimes the old woman I mentioned, when she was able, went in the carriage. Dr. Angus, our clergyman, is a most excellent man, so that going to hear him preach was a source of real pleasure and improvement to me. All the servants sat near us in church, and I used to be greatly pleased with their attentive, and even devout appearance; but, indeed, Dunallan had taken so much pains with them, they must have been very insensible had they not at least wished for information. When church was over, every one returned home. No servant was allowed to visit on Sunday. It had been Mr. Dunallan's custom to assemble the

men servants in the evening, to instruct and converse with them. In his absence, they of themselves requested the steward to read to them, which he did. He is an excellent and sensible man. Mrs. Oswald and I divided the female servants. She took the elder ones, while I assembled the young ones in my apartment; and I have found the greatest satisfaction in doing this. We afterwards again assembled to prayers, and thus finished the day."

Elizabeth sighed, and continued thoughtful for a few moments.

"Now tell me, Elizabeth," said Catharine, "how you spend Sunday, since you have been mistress of a family?"

"You will think us sad heathens," replied Elizabeth.

"Let me hear," said Catharine, smiling.

"Well, we are always late on that morning, poor Philip has so much to say to me. We sometimes go to church in the morning, and always in the evening. As to my servants, I really do not know what becomes of them. They go out by turns, which they settle among themselves, I believe; and they have a general order to be home by nine o'clock; but as I spend Sunday generally with my mother, I really know very little about them. At my mother's, we sometimes read a ser-

mon in the evening. She always wishes us to do so, but is so anxious to see us amused and happy, she does not always urge it."

Catharine took Elizabeth's hand in hers; "My own Elizabeth, can you think this fulfils the law to keep the Sabbath day holy?"

"Our conversation is very innocent, Catharine."

"But, Elizabeth, does Heaven permit it ever to be otherwise on any day? That cannot fulfil the commandment respecting this one."

"But we are all so happy to meet at my mother's, and have so much to talk about, I cannot think Heaven frowns on our affectionate and happy circle."

"But why not meet on other days?"

"That is impossible. Philip is so immersed in business now, he has not a day to give to any one during the session, excepting some of those days on which he must give or go to professional kind of dinners."

"But, Elizabeth, what day has he to prepare for eternity?"

Elizabeth sighed; "Our whole lives, Catharine, must be that preparation day."

"True. But if we have a day mercifully set apart for that momentous work, my Elizabeth, ought we to pass it away in other occupations?"

Is not some knowledge of the truths of religion necessary? I believe that Mr. Melville's profession is calculated highly to benefit his fellow-men? but love to man is only one part of the law of God, you know, my Elizabeth, and the second part. The first is love to God; and can we love him without making ourselves acquainted with his character?"

Elizabeth was silent for a moment. "I believe you are right, Catharine. *We* spend too little time and thought on those subjects, and *you* perhaps too much; but tell me truly, is Mr. Dunallan a cheerful man, or is he not rather melancholy and grave from his religion?"

"I appeal to yourself, Elizabeth, whether he is not at least singularly agreeable in society," asked Catharine.

"Extremely so," replied Elizabeth. "I never saw any man with equal powers of conversation, or with more apparent sweetness of temper, and warmth of feeling; yet when I have seen him, though he has nothing gloomy in his manners, he has something unusually grave."

"But when you have seen him, he has always been in rather painful circumstances. However, I would not characterize Mr. Dunallan as exactly a very cheerful man, though he has the power of stealing away one's sadness more than any person

I ever knew. The reason of this I believe is, that he guesses the cause, and finds means to do that away. But you are mistaken in supposing the grave and thoughtful cast of his character has been produced by religion. I believe it to be his natural disposition, and that religion has, on the contrary, given a new motive and charm to his existence. Since I have been with him, I have learnt his hours of solitude and study of sacred things; and when I have met him after those times, I cannot describe to you the heavenly calmness of his countenance and manner, or the sweet, feeling, animated liveliness of his conversation. Ah, my Elizabeth, can the study of the divine character and perfections fail to improve every power of the mind, and every feeling of the heart? Can communion with God fail to leave a peace in the soul, which rejoices the whole internal being, and inspires the most perfect benevolence to all around; and to those most dearly loved, a warmth, and purity, and ardour of affection? Ah, how pleasing! how inexpressibly valuable!"

"My own Catharine," said Elizabeth, "what an enthusiast you are become! I feel, too, that you would soon infect me, though I scarcely know what you mean. But there is Melville's ring at the door." Elizabeth started up, and flew to meet

him. " I shall tell him you are come, Catharine."

Catharine was not quite so much delighted with the interruption as Elizabeth was. She could still have talked for hours of Dunallan. Even Elizabeth's husband could scarcely, at this moment, excite her interest. Elizabeth returned into the room with him, her countenance betraying her anxiety that he and Catharine should confirm all she had said of both. Melville's appearance was very pleasing, and conveyed an impression of much talent, from the fire of his dark eyes, and the lively cast of his whole countenance. His tall and slight figure, and animated gestures when he spoke, rather added to this. Catharine was extremely pleased with his appearance and manner. He also seemed to find her as amiable as Elizabeth had described her to be. Elizabeth's countenance beamed with pleasure; but, as the conversation became more general, Catharine's sadness returned. Her thoughts continually followed Dunallan, travelling in solitude; and she felt happy when the hour arrived to separate for the night.

Elizabeth, however, followed her to her apartment. Catharine looked smilingly in her face. " Now, Elizabeth, you want to know what I think of Mr. Melville."

“ Well, Catharine, what *do* you think of him?”

“ I think he is almost as handsome as Mr. Dunallan.”

“ *Almost!* Well that is a great deal from you. And his manners, are they *almost* as pleasing?”

“ His manners are so different I cannot compare them; but I think Mr. Melville very agreeable indeed.”

“ Well, I am satisfied,” replied Elizabeth. “ I see Philip is charmed with you. Good night. I must not keep you up after your fatigues of to-day.”

Catharine, when left alone, recalled all that had that day passed between herself and Dunallan. The certainty of his love for her was peace and delight to her heart. She now deeply regretted having *had* any reserves with him; but for these she might now have been saved that anxiety which she could not overcome, whenever the thought occurred of the possibility of his meeting St. Clair, and of any explanation taking place between them. She trembled at this idea; for she was convinced that St. Clair would rather seek than avoid any cause of quarrel.

In this state of uneasiness, she had but one resource,—to cast all her cares on her Almighty Protector; and, in doing so, she found the truest support and consolation. She also found the

truth of what Dunallan had said, "That the remembrance of the presence of that Almighty Guardian with both, united them at least in soul." At that hour Dunallan had promised to meet her in spirit, at the throne of mercy and love. The thought was soothing and delightful; it hallowed while it increased her affection for him; and her anxiety yielded to hope and trust. After thus committing herself to the care of heaven, Catharine began to revolve in her own mind, the most proper means to use, in order to obtain an explanation respecting her letters, and also to overcome St. Clair's hatred of Dunallan, and desire of injuring him. She had not forgot the example of Dunallan's mother, in leaving whatever she could have no power over in the hands of heaven, in humble hope and trust; but, in this case, she felt certain of possessing some influence, and she could not be satisfied while she left untried any attempt to secure the safety of Dunallan. She recollected St. Clair from his boyish days, and, in every scene, every circumstance which her memory recalled, while petulant, violent, and contemptuous to every one else, to her he had ever been gentle, feeling, and even delicate. A feeling of pity followed these recollections, and an earnest desire to see him restored to the path of rectitude at least. When she remembered his

even fastidious sense of honour; his abhorrence of every thing low or mean; his family pride; his haughtiness of character; she could scarcely believe herself right in her suspicions; but no one else was capable of such deep-laid schemes to make Dunallan wretched, amongst those she had formerly known, neither could any being on earth, she believed, succeed so perfectly, from his power of imitating her writing. She at last determined to write herself to St. Clair, and to make Mrs. Oswald acquainted with her having done so. She hoped much from this; though, after writing her letter several times over, she was still dissatisfied with its contents.

“ TO A. ST. CLAIR, Esq.

“ YOU will be surprised to see a letter from me, Mr. St. Clair; perhaps you will not be so much surprised to be told, that you have it in your power to add very much to my happiness, or, if you refuse a request I wish to make, to lessen that happiness very materially. I feel extreme reluctance, however, to make this request; not because I feel unwilling to be under an obligation to you, but because I shrink from entering on the subject regarding which I wish to make this request. I shrink from putting into words what I am too certain I am right in believing to be

true; but I think you must understand me. I only wish to entreat you to put it into my power to convince the person to whom I am united for ever, that I am not unworthy of his confidence. In doing this no explanation, no mortifying confession is asked. I at least will consider myself obliged. I only wish the return of those letters which expressed the real feelings of my heart to that person to whom they are addressed. I am confident that I plead for your own happiness, Mr. St. Clair, when I ask you to do this. I think I may also appeal to yourself whether I ever, in the slightest degree, gave you cause for your present desire to make me unhappy. You knew my father's plan to unite me to Mr. Dunallan almost as soon as I knew it myself—you knew my promise, and my determination to fulfil his wishes, whatever it should cost me. Have you not (indirectly at least) praised my filial devotion, as you called it? And yet you wish to render me unhappy and despised, because I persevered in doing what you yourself approved! You wish to subject me to the most painful and degrading of all suspicions! You wish me to live oppressed with the feeling that I must appear deserving of those suspicions! Can it be possible that this kind of power over my happiness can give you any pleasure? Can you recollect how

you have obtained it, and not long for the power to free yourself from it? I think I know you sufficiently to be certain, that you will never enjoy a moment's peace or satisfaction of mind while you are conscious yourself of this taint upon your honour, were you even perfectly convinced the world would never know it. You also know me sufficiently, Mr. St. Clair, to be certain that I wish not intentionally to mislead you in the slightest degree. I think you under the influence of a very powerful passion; but not of that passion which finds an excuse in almost every heart, but of one which finds pity or excuse nowhere,—you hate Mr. Dunallan. I take the privilege of an old friend, and entreat you to forgive me, and for your own sake ask yourself whether I am wrong? I entreat you to call to your aid those nobler and more generous feelings which, for a time, you have banished, and attempt to overcome this degrading and dangerous passion,—degrading to you, and dangerous (I cannot help dreading) to him against whom you indulge it. I do not conceal from you my dread of his danger; for, by thus throwing myself on your humanity, I feel as if I chained up your very thoughts from injuring him.

I shall ask Mrs. Oswald to forward this to you as I am ignorant of your address, and think she

will discover it more easily than I can, and because I wish her to know what I have written to you, since I must conceal it from Mr. Dunallan.

C. DUNALLAN."

After finishing this letter, Catharine retired to dream over the occurrences of the day.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.





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